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St. John's

THE HOME BOOK OF VERSE

AMERICAN AND ENGLISH

1580-1912

With an Appendix Containing a Few Well-known Poems
in Other Languages

Selected and Arranged

By

BURTON EGBERT STEVENSON

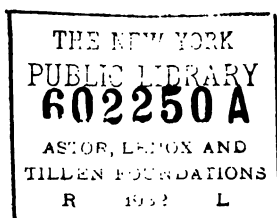
VOLUME VII

POEMS OF SENTIMENT
AND REFLECTION



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HENRY HOLT AND COMPANY

1915



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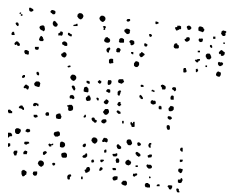


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PART VI
POEMS OF SENTIMENT AND
REFLECTION

THE NOBLE NATURE

From "An Ode to Sir Lucius Cary and Sir H. Morison"

It is not growing like a tree
In bulk, doth make man better be;
Or standing long an oak, three hundred year,
To fall a log at last, dry, bald, and sear:
A lily of a day
Is fairer far in May,
Although it fall and die that night,—
It was the plant and flower of Light.
In small proportions we just beauties see,
And in short measures life may perfect be.

Ben Jonson [1573?-1637]

THE PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE

SWEET AND SOUR

From "Amoretti"

SWEET is the rose, but grows upon a brier;
Sweet is the juniper, but sharp his bough;
Sweet is the eglantine, but pricketh near;
Sweet is the fir-bloom, but his branches rough;
Sweet is the cypress, but his rind is tough;
Sweet is the nut, but bitter is his pill;
Sweet is the broom-flower, but yet sour enough;
And sweet is moly, but his root is ill:
So every sweet with sour is tempered still.
That maketh it be coveted the more;
For easy things, that may be got at will,
Most sorts of men do set but little store.
Why then should I account of little pain,
That endless pleasure shall unto me gain?

Edmund Spenser [1552?-1599]

ON THE LIFE OF MAN

LIKE to the falling of a star,
Or as the flights of eagles are,
Or like the fresh spring's gaudy hue,
Or silver drops of morning dew,
Or like a wind that chafes the flood,
Or bubbles which on water stood:
Even such is Man, whose borrowed light
Is straight called in and paid to night.
The wind blows out, the bubble dies,
The spring entombed in autumn lies;
The dew's dried up, the star is shot,
The flight is past,—and man forgot.

Henry King [1592-1669]

ALL IS VANITY

WHETHER men do laugh or weep,
Whether they do wake or sleep,
Whether they die young or old,
Whether they feel heat or cold;
There is underneath the sun
Nothing in true earnest done.

All our pride is but a jest,
None are worst and none are best,
Grief and joy, and hope and fear
Play their pageants everywhere:
Vain Opinion all doth sway,
And the world is but a play.

Powers above in clouds do sit,
Mocking our poor apish wit,
That so lamely with such state
Their high glory imitate.
No ill can be felt but pain,
And that happy men disdain.

Philip Rosseter [1575?-1623]

TIMES GO BY TURNS

THE loppèd tree in time may grow again,
Most naked plants renew both fruit and flower;
The sorriest wight may find release of pain,
The driest soil suck in some moistening shower;
Times go by turns, and chances change by course,
From foul to fair, from better hap to worse.

The sea of Fortune doth not ever flow,
She draws her favors to the lowest ebb;
Her tides have equal times to come and go,
Her loom doth weave the fine and coarsest web;
No joy so great but runneth to an end,
No hap so hard but may in fine amend.

“The Struggle Naught Availeth” 2731

Not always fall of leaf, nor ever spring,
No endless night, yet not eternal day;
The saddest birds a season find to sing,
The roughest storm a calm may soon allay:
Thus, with succeeding turns, God tempereth all,
That man may hope to rise. yet fear to fall.

A chance may win that by mischance was lost;
That net that holds no great, takes little fish;
In some things all, in all things none are crossed;
Few all they need, but none have all they wish.
Unmingled joys here to no man befall:
Who least, hath some; who most, hath never all.

Robert Southwell [1561?–1595]

“SAY NOT, THE STRUGGLE NAUGHT AVAILETH”

SAY not, the struggle naught availeth,
The labor and the wounds are vain,
The enemy faints not, nor faileth,
And as things have been they remain.

If hopes were dupes, fears may be liars;
It may be, in yon smoke concealed,
Your comrades chase e'en now the fliers,
And, but for you, possess the field.

For while the tired waves, vainly breaking,
Seem here no painful inch to gain,
Far back, through creeks and inlets making,
Comes silent, flooding in, the main.

And not by eastern windows only,
When daylight comes, comes in the light;
In front, the sun climbs slow, how slowly,
But westward, look, the land is bright.

Arthur Hugh Clough [1819–1861]

KYRIELLE

A LARK in the mesh of the tangled vine,
 A bee that drowns in the flower-cup's wine,
 A fly in the sunshine,—such is man.
 All things must end, as all began.

A little pain, a little pleasure,
 A little heaping up of treasure;
 Then no more gazing upon the sun.
 All things must end that have begun.

Where is the time for hope or doubt?
 A puff of the wind, and life is out;
 A turn of the wheel, and rest is won.
 All things must end that have begun.

Golden morning and purple night,
 Life that fails with the failing light;
 Death is the only deathless one.
 All things must end that have begun.

Ending waits on the brief beginning;
 Is the prize worth the stress of winning?
 E'en in the dawning the day is done.
 All things must end that have begun.

·Weary waiting and weary striving,
 Glad outseting and sad arriving;
 What is it worth when the goal is won?
 All things must end that have begun.

Speedily fades the morning glitter;
 Love grows irksome and wine grows bitter.
 Two are parted from what was one.
 All things must end that have begun.

Toil and pain and the evening rest;
 Joy is weary and sleep is best;
 Fair and softly the day is done.
 All things must end that have begun.

John Payne [*fl.* 1770-1800]

"LET ME ENJOY"

LET me enjoy the earth no less
Because the all-enacting Might
That fashioned forth its loveliness
Had other aims than my delight.

About my path there flits a Fair,
Who throws me not a word or sign;
I will find charm in her uncare,
And laud those lips not meant for mine.

From manuscripts of moving song
Inspired by scenes and souls unknown,
I'll pour out raptures that belong
To others, as they were my own.

Perhaps some day, toward Paradise
And all its blest—if such should be—
I shall lift glad, afar-off eyes,
Though it contain no place for me.

Thomas Hardy [1840-

SONG

BECAUSE the rose must fade,
Shall I not love the rose?
Because the summer shade
Passes when winter blows,
Shall I not rest me there
In the cool air?

Because the sunset sky
Makes music in my soul,
Only to fail and die,
Shall I not take the whole
Of beauty that it gives
While yet it lives?

Because the sweet of youth
 Doth vanish all too soon,
 Shall I forget, forsooth,
 To learn its lingering tune;
 My joy to memorize
 In those young eyes?

If, like the summer flower
 That blooms—a fragrant death,
 Keen music hath no power
 To live beyond its breath,
 Then of this flood of song
 Let me drink long!

Ah, yes, because the rose
 Fades like the sunset skies;
 Because rude winter blows
 All bare, and music dies—
 Therefore, now is to me
 Eternity!

Richard Watson Gilder [1844-1909]

"WHERE RUNS THE RIVER"

WHERE runs the river? Who can say
 Who hath not followed all the way
 By alders green and sedges gray
 And blossoms blue?

Where runs the river? Hill and wood
 Curve round to hem the eager flood;
 It cannot straightly as it would
 Its path pursue.

Yet this we know: O'er whatso plains
 Or rocks or waterfalls it strains,
 At last the Vast the stream attains;
 And I, and you.

Francis William Bourdillon [1852-

SELF-DEPENDENCE

WEARY of myself, and sick of asking
What I am, and what I ought to be,
At this vessel's prow I stand, which bears me
Forwards, forwards, o'er the starlit sea.

And a look of passionate desire
O'er the sea and to the stars I send:
"Ye who from my childhood up have calmed me,
Calm me, ah, compose me to the end!

"Ah, once more," I cried, "ye stars, ye waters,
On my heart your mighty charm renew;
Still, still let me, as I gaze upon you,
Feel my soul becoming vast like you!"

From the intense, clear, star-sown vault of heaven,
Over the lit sea's unquiet way,
In the rustling night-air came the answer:
"Wouldst thou *be* as these are? *Live* as they.

"Unaffrighted by the silence round them,
Undistracted by the sights they see,
These demand not that the things without them
Yield them love, amusement, sympathy.

"And with joy the stars perform their shining,
And the sea its long moon-silvered roll;
For self-poised they live, nor pine with noting
All the fever of some differing soul.

"Bounded by themselves, and unregardful
In what state God's other works may be,
In their own tasks all their powers pouring,
These attain the mighty life you see."

O air-born voice! long since, severely clear,
A cry like thine in mine own heart I hear:
"Resolve to be thyself; and know, that he,
Who finds himself, loses his misery!"

Matthew Arnold [1822-1888]

HOPE AND FEAR

BENEATH the shadow of dawn's aerial cope,
 With eyes enkindled as the sun's own sphere,
 Hope from the front of youth in godlike cheer
 Looks Godward, past the shades where blind men grope
 Round the dark door that prayers nor dreams can ope,
 And makes for joy the very darkness dear
 That gives her wide wings play; nor dreams that Fear
 At noon may rise and pierce the heart of Hope.
 Then, when the soul leaves off to dream and yearn,
 May Truth first purge her eyesight to discern
 What once being known leaves time no power to appall;
 Till youth at last, ere yet youth be not, learn
 The kind wise word that falls from years that fall—
 "Hope not thou much, and fear thou not at all."

Algernon Charles Swinburne [1837-1909]

ON HIS BLINDNESS

WHEN I consider how my light is spent
 Ere half my days in this dark world and wide,
 And that one talent, which is death to hide,
 Lodged with me useless, though my soul more bent
 To serve therewith my Maker, and present
 My true account, lest He returning chide;
 "Doth God exact day-labor, light denied?"
 I fondly ask. But Patience, to prevent
 That murmur, soon replies, "God doth not need
 Either man's work or his own gifts; who best
 Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best; his state
 Is kingly; thousands at his bidding speed,
 And post o'er land and ocean without rest;
 They also serve who only stand and wait."

John Milton [1608-1674]

OZYMANDIAS OF EGYPT

I MET a traveler from an antique land
 Who said: Two vast and trunkless legs of stone

Stand in the desert. Near them, on the sand,
Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown
And wrinkled lip and sneer of cold command
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,
The hand that mocked them and the heart that fed;
And on the pedestal these words appear:
“My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:
Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!”
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare,
The lone and level sands stretch far away.

Percy Bysshe Shelley [1792-1822]

A TURKISH LEGEND

A CERTAIN Pasha, dead five thousand years,
Once from his harem fled in sudden tears,

And had this sentence on the city's gate
Deeply engraven, “Only God is great.”

So these four words above the city's noise
Hung like the accents of an angel's voice,

And evermore, from the high barbican,
Saluted each returning caravan.

Lost is that city's glory. Every gust
Lifts, with dead leaves, the unknown Pasha's dust,

And all is ruin,—save one wrinkled gate
Whereon is written, “Only God is great.”

Thomas Bailey Aldrich [1837-1907]

“EVEN THIS SHALL PASS AWAY”

ONCE in Persia reigned a King,
Who upon his signet ring
'Graved a maxim true and wise,
Which, if held before the eyes,

Gave him counsel at a glance,
 Fit for every change and chance.
 Solemn words, and these are they:
 "Even this shall pass away."

Trains of camels through the sand
 Brought him gems from Samarcand;
 Fleets of galleys through the seas
 Brought him pearls to match with these.
 But he counted not his gain
 Treasures of the mine or main;
 "What is wealth?" the King would say;
 "Even this shall pass away."

In the revels of his court
 At the zenith of the sport,
 When the palms of all his guests
 Burned with clapping at his jests,
 He, amid his figs and wine,
 Cried: "Oh, loving friends of mine!
 Pleasure comes, but not to stay;
 Even this shall pass away."

Fighting on a furious field,
 Once a javelin pierced his shield;
 Soldiers with a loud lament
 Bore him bleeding to his tent;
 Groaning from his tortured side,
 "Pain is hard to bear," he cried,
 "But with patience, day by day—
 Even this shall pass away."

Towering in the public square,
 Twenty cubits in the air,
 Rose his statue, carved in stone.
 Then the King, disguised, unknown,
 Stood before his sculptured name,
 Musing meekly, "What is fame?
 Fame is but a slow decay—
 Even this shall pass away."

Three Sonnets on Oblivion 2739

Struck with palsy, sere and old,
Waiting at the gates of gold,
Said he, with his dying breath:
"Life is done, but what is death?"
Then, in answer to the King,
Fell a sunbeam on his ring,
Showing by a heavenly ray—
"Even this shall pass away."

Theodore Tilton [1835-1907]

SESOSTRIS

SOLE Lord of Lords and very King of Kings,
He sits within the desert, carved in stone;
Inscrutable, colossal, and alone,
And ancients than memory of things.
Graved on his front the sacred beetle clings;
Disdain sits on his lips; and in a frown
Scorn lives upon his forehead for a crown.
The affrighted ostrich dare not dust her wings
Anear this Presence. The long caravan's
Dazed camels pause, and mute the Bedouins stare.
This symbol of past power more than man's
Presages doom. Kings look—and Kings despair:
Their scepters tremble in their jeweled hands
And dark thrones totter in the baleful air!

Lloyd Mifflin [1846-

THREE SONNETS ON OBLIVION

OBLIVION

HER eyes have seen the monoliths of kings
Upcast like foam of the effacing tide;
She hath beheld the desert stars deride
The monuments of power's imaginings:
About their base the wind Assyrian flings
The dust that throned the satrap in his pride;
Cambyzes and the Memphian pomps abide

As in the flame the moth's presumptuous wings.
 There gleams no glory that her hand shall spare,
 Nor any sun whose rays shall cross her night,
 Whose realm enfolds man's empire and its end.
 No armor of renown her sword shall dare,
 No council of the gods withstand her might—
 Stricken at last Time's lonely Titans bend.

THE DUST DETHRONED

Sargon is dust, Semiramis a clod.
 In crypts profaned the moon at midnight peers;
 The owl upon the Sphinx hoots in her ears,
 And scant and sere the desert grasses nod
 Where once the armies of Assyria trod,
 With younger sunlight splendid on the spears;
 The lichens cling the closer with the years,
 And seal the eyelids of the weary god.
 Where high the tombs of royal Egypt heave,
 The vulture shadows with arrested wings
 The indecipherable boasts of kings,
 Till Arab children hear their mother's cry
 And leave in mockery their toy—they leave
 The skull of Pharaoh staring at the sky.

THE NIGHT OF GODS

Their mouths have drunken the eternal wine—
 The draught that Baal in oblivion sips.
 Unseen about their courts the adder slips,
 Unheard the sucklings of the leopard whine;
 The toad has found a resting-place divine,
 And bloats in stupor between Ammon's lips.
 O Carthage and the unreturning ships,
 The fallen pinnacle, the shifting Sign!
 Lo! when I hear from voiceless court and fane
 Time's adoration of eternity,—
 The cry of kingdoms past and gods undone,—
 I stand as one whose feet at noontide gain
 A lonely shore; who feels his soul set free,
 And hears the blind sea chanting to the sun.

George Sterling [1869-

THE MAGIC MIRROR

THE Magic Mirror makes not nor unmakes,
Charms none to sleep nor any from sleep wakes;
It only giveth back the thing it takes.

It is the heart's own cheer that makes it glad,
And one's own bitterness will drive him mad;
It needeth not that other help be had.

The Mirror maketh none to rise or fall;
To him that hath not doth no portion call;
To him that hath is freely given all.

They see themselves who look in Fortune's face;
Unto the sad is sadness Heaven's grace,
And to the souls that love is love's embrace.

Henry Mills Alden [1836-

EBB AND FLOW

I WALKED beside the evening sea,
And dreamed a dream that could not be;
The waves that plunged along the shore
Said only—"Dreamer, dream no more!"

But still the legions charged the beach;
Loud rang their battle-cry, like speech;
But changed was the imperial strain:
It murmured—"Dreamer, dream again!"

I homeward turned from out the gloom,—
That sound I heard not in my room;
But suddenly a sound, that stirred
Within my very breast, I heard.

It was my heart, that like a sea
Within my breast beat ceaselessly:
But like the waves along the shore,
It said—"Dream on!" and "Dream no more!"

George William Curtis [1824-1892]

THE KING OF DREAMS

SOME must delve when the dawn is nigh;
 Some must toil when the noonday beams;
 But when night comes, and the soft winds sigh,
 Every man is a King of Dreams!

One must plod while another must ply
 At plow or loom till the sunset streams,
 But when night comes, and the moon rides high,
 Every man is a King of Dreams!

One is slave to a master's cry,
 Another serf to a despot seems,
 But when night comes, and the discords die,
 Every man is a King of Dreams!

This you may sell and that may buy,
 And this you may barter for gold that gleams,
 But there's one domain that is fixed for aye,—
 Every man is a King of Dreams!

Clinton Scollard [1860—

MASQUERADE

WE dance with proud and smiling lips,
 With frank, appealing eyes, with shy hands clinging.
 We sing, and few will question if there slips
 A sob into our singing.

Each has a certain step to learn;
 Our prisoned feet move staidly in set places,
 And to and fro we pass, since life is stern,
 Patiently with masked faces.

Olive Custance [18 —

THE HIGHER PANTHEISM

THE sun, the moon, the stars, the seas, the hills and the
 plains—
 Are not these, O Soul, the Vision of Him who reigns?

Is not the Vision he? though He be not that which He
seems?

Dreams are true while they last, and do we not live in
dreams?

Earth, these solid stars, this weight of body and limb,
Are they not sign and symbol of thy division from Him?

Dark is the world to thee: thyself art the reason why;
For is He not all but thou, that hast power to feel "I am I"?

Glory about thee, without thee; and thou fulfillest thy doom,
Making Him broken gleams, and a stifled splendor and
gloom.

Speak to Him, thou, for He hears, and Spirit with Spirit can
meet—

Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet.

God is law, say the wise; O Soul, and let us rejoice,
For if He thunder by law the thunder is yet His voice.

Law is God, say some: no God at all, says the fool;
For all we have power to see is a straight staff bent in a pool;

And the ear of man cannot hear, and the eye of man cannot
see;

But if we could see and hear, this Vision—were it not He?

Alfred Tennyson [1809-1892]

WHILE THE DAYS GO BY

I SHALL not say, our life is all in vain,
For peace may cheer the desolated hearth;
But well I know that, on this weary earth,
Round each joy-island is a sea of pain—
And the days go by.

We watch our hopes, far flickering in the night,
Once radiant torches, lighted in our youth,
To guide, through years, to some broad morn of truth;
But these go out and leave us with no light—
And the days go by.

2744 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

We see the clouds of summer go and come,
And thirsty verdure praying them to give:
We cry, "O Nature, tell us why we live!"
She smiles with beauty, but her lips are dumb—
And the days go by.

Yet what are we? We breathe, we love, we cease:
Too soon our little orbits change and fall:
We are Fate's children, very tired; and all
Are homeless strangers, craving rest and peace—
And the days go by.

I only ask to drink experience deep;
And, in the sad, sweet goblet of my years,
To find love poured with all its smiles and tears,
And quaffing this, I too shall sweetly sleep—
While the days go by.

Henry Abbey [1842-1911]

THE WAYFARER

I WILL reach far down in the pit of sorrow
And gather song,
With the bitter past I will deck to-morrow.

I will turn no cowardly look behind me,
But still fare on
Till the glow of ultimate joy shall blind me.

For I ask no blessing and no forgiving,
The gain was mine,
Since I learn from all things the truth of living.

Helen Huntington [18 -

BOOKRA

As I lay asleep in Italy.—SHELLEY

ONE night I lay asleep in Africa,
In a closed garden by the city gate;
A desert horseman, furious and late,
Came wildly thundering at the massive bar,

"Open in Allah's name! Wake, Mustapha!
 Slain is the Sultan,—treason, war, and hate
 Rage from Fez to Tetuan! Open straight."
 The watchman heard as thunder from afar:
 "Go to! In peace this city lies asleep;
 To all-knowing Allah 'tis no news you bring;"
 Then turned in slumber still his watch to keep.
 At once a nightingale began to sing,
 In oriental calm the garden lay,—
 Panic and war postponed another day.

Charles Dudley Warner [1829-1900]

INTO THE TWILIGHT

OUT-WORN heart, in a time out-worn,
 Come clear of the nets of wrong and right;
 Laugh, heart, again in the gray twilight,
 Sigh, heart, again in the dew of the morn.

Your mother Eire is always young,
 Dew ever shining and twilight gray;
 Though hope fall from you and love decay,
 Burning in fires of a slanderous tongue.

Come, heart, where hill is heaped upon hill:
 For there the mystical brotherhood
 Of sun and moon and hollow and wood
 And river and stream work out their will;

And God stands winding His lonely horn,
 And time and the world are ever in flight;
 And love is less kind than the gray twilight,
 And hope is less dear than the dew of the morn.

William Butler Yeats [1865-

LIFE

WHEN I consider Life and its few years—
 A wisp of fog betwixt us and the sun;
 A call to battle, and the battle done
 Ere the last echo dies within our ears;

2746 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

A rose choked in the grass; an hour of fears;
The gusts that past a darkening shore do beat;
The burst of music down an unlistening street—
I wonder at the idleness of tears.
Ye old, old dead, and ye of yesternight,
Chieftains, and bards, and keepers of the sheep,
By every cup of sorrow that you had,
Loose me from tears, and make me see aright
How each hath back what once he stayed to weep;
Homer his sight, David his little lad!

Lizette Woodworth Reese [1856—

VERS LA VIE

The statue by Victor Rosseau in the Palais des Beaux Arts, Brussels

ANGEL, hast thou betrayed me? Long ago
In the Forgotten Land of souls that wait,
Thou leddest me to the outward-folding gate,
Bidding me live. I leaned into the flow
Of earthward-rushing spirits, fain to know
What are humanity and human fate
Of which the rumor reached to where we sate
In our cool, hidden, dreamless ante-glow.
But I learn not, and am bewildered here
To know why thou with seeming-kindly hands
Didst let me forth, explorer of a star
Where all is strange, and very often Fear
Urges retreat to that Forgotten Land's
Unthoughtful shores where thou and Silence are!

Arthur Upson [1877—1908]

LIFE

WE are born; we laugh; we weep;
We love; we droop; we die!
Ah! wherefore do we laugh or weep?
Why do we live, or die?
Who knows that secret deep?
Alas, not I!

Why doth the violet spring
Unseen by human eye?
Why do the radiant seasons bring
Sweet thoughts that quickly fly?
Why do our fond hearts cling
To things that die?

We toil,—through pain and wrong;
We fight,—and fly;
We love; we lose; and then, ere long,
Stone-dead we lie.
O life! is *all* thy song
“Endure and—die?”

Bryan Waller Procter [1787-1874]

PRE-EXISTENCE

WHILE sauntering through the crowded street,
Some half-remembered face I meet,

Albeit upon no mortal shore
That face, methinks, has smiled before.

Lost in a gay and festal throng,
I tremble at some tender song,

Set to an air whose golden bars
I must have heard in other stars.

In sacred aisles I pause to share
The blessing of a priestly prayer,—

When the whole scene which greets mine eyes
In some strange mode I recognize,

As one whose every mystic part
I feel prefigured in my heart.

At sunset, as I calmly stand,
A stranger on an alien strand,

2748 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

Familiar as my childhood's home
Seems the long stretch of wave and foam.

One sails toward me o'er the bay,
And what he comes to do and say

I can foretell. A prescient lore
Springs from some life outlived of yore.

O swift, instinctive, startling gleams
Of deep soul-knowledge! not as *dreams*

For aye ye vaguely dawn and die,
But oft with lightning certainty

Pierce through the dark, oblivious brain,
To make old thoughts and memories plain—

Thoughts which perchance must travel back
Across the wild, bewildering track

Of countless æons; memories far,
High-reaching as yon pallid star,

Unknown, scarce seen, whose flickering grace
Faints on the outmost rings of space!

Paul Hamilton Hayne [1830-1886]

ENVOY

From "Songs from Vagabondia"

I

HAVE little care that Life is brief,
And less that Art is long.
Success is in the silences
Though Fame is in the song.

II

With the Orient in her eyes,
Life my mistress lured me on.
"Knowledge," said that look of hers,
"Shall be yours when all is done."

Like a pomegranate in halves,
"Drink me," said that mouth of hers,
And I drank who now am here
Where my dust with dust confers.

Bliss Carman [1861—

THE PETRIFIED FERN

IN a valley, centuries ago,
Grew a little fern-leaf, green and slender,
Veining delicate and fibers tender;
Waving when the wind crept down so low.
Rushes tall, and moss, and grass grew round it,
Playful sunbeams darted in and found it,
Drops of dew stole in by night, and crowned it,
But no foot of man e'er trod that way;
Earth was young, and keeping holiday.

Monster fishes swam the silent main,
Stately forests waved their giant branches,
Mountains hurled their snowy avalanches,
Mammoth creatures stalked across the plain;
Nature reveled in grand mysteries,
But the little fern was not of these,
Did not number with the hills and trees;
Only grew and waved its wild sweet way,—
No one came to note it day by day.

Earth, one time, put on a frolic mood,
Heaved the rocks and changed the mighty motion
Of the deep, strong currents of the ocean;
Moved the plain and shook the haughty wood,
Crushed the little fern in soft moist clay,
Covered it, and hid it safe away.
Oh, the long, long centuries since that day!
Oh, the changes! Oh, life's bitter cost,
Since that useless little fern was lost!

Useless? Lost? There came a thoughtful man
Searching Nature's secrets, far and deep;
From a fissure in a rocky steep
He withdrew a stone, o'er which there ran

2750 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

Fairy pencilings, a quaint design,
Veinings, leafage, fibers clear and fine.
And the fern's life lay in every line!
So, I think, God hides some souls away,
Sweetly to surprise us, the last day.

Mary Bolles Branch [1840-

THE QUESTION WHITHER

WHEN we have thrown off this old suit,
So much in need of mending,
To sink among the naked mute,
Is that, think you, our ending?
We follow many, more we lead,
And you who sadly turf us,
Believe not that all living seed
Must flower above the surface.

Sensation is a gracious gift,
But were it cramped to station,
The prayer to have it cast adrift,
Would spout from all sensation.
Enough if we have winked to sun,
Have sped the plow a season;
There is a soul for labor done,
Endureth fixed as reason.

Then let our trust be firm in Good,
Though we be of the fasting;
Our questions are a mortal brood,
Our work is everlasting.
We children of Beneficence
Are in its being sharers;
And Whither vainer sounds than Whence,
For word with such wayfarers.

George Meredith [1828-1909]

THE GOOD GREAT MAN

How seldom, friend, a good great man inherits
Honor or wealth, with all his worth and pains!

It seems a story from the land of spirits
When any man obtains that which he merits,
Or any merit that which he obtains.

REPLY TO THE ABOVE

For shame, dear friend! renounce this canting strain!
What wouldst thou have a good great man obtain?
Wealth, title, dignity, a gilded chain,
Or throne of corses which his sword hath slain?
Greatness and goodness are not means, but ends.
Hath he not always treasures, always friends,—
The good great man? Three treasures,—love, and light,
And calm thoughts, equable as infant's breath;
And three firm friends, more sure than day and night,—
Himself, his Maker, and the Angel Death.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge [1772-1834]

HUMAN FRAILTY

WEAK and irresolute is man;
The purpose of to-day,
Woven with pains into his plan,
To-morrow rends away.

The bow well bent, and smart the spring,
Vice seems already slain;
But Passion rudely snaps the string,
And it revives again.

Some foe to his upright intent
Finds out his weaker part;
Virtue engages his assent,
But Pleasure wins his heart.

'Tis here the folly of the wise
Through all his art we view:
And while his tongue the charge denies,
His conscience owns it true.

Bound on a voyage of awful length
 And dangers little known,
 A stranger to superior strength,
 Man vainly trusts his own.

But oars alone can ne'er prevail
 To reach the distant coast;
 The breath of Heaven must swell the sail,
 Or all the toil is lost.

William Cowper [1731-1800]

STANZAS

WHERE forlorn sunsets flare and fade
 On desolate sea and lonely sand,
 Out of the silence and the shade
 What is the voice of strange command
 Calling you still, as friend calls friend
 With love that cannot brook delay,
 To rise and follow the ways that wend
 Over the hills and far away?

Hark to the city, street on street
 A roaring reach of death and life,
 Of vortices that clash and fleet
 And ruin in appointed strife;
 Hark to it calling, calling clear,
 Calling until you cannot stay,
 From dearer things than your own most dear
 Over the hills and far away.

Out of the sound of the ebb-and-flow,
 Out of the sight of lamp and star,
 It calls you where the good winds blow,
 And the unchanging meadows are;
 From faded hopes and hopes agleam,
 It calls you, calls you night and day
 Beyond the dark, into the dream
 Over the hills and far away.

William Ernest Henley [1849-1903]

THE SEEKERS

FRIENDS and loves we have none, nor wealth, nor blest
abode,

But the hope, the burning hope, and the road, the lonely
road.

Not for us are content, and quiet, and peace of mind,
For we go seeking cities that we shall never find.

There is no solace on earth for us—for such as we—
Who search for the hidden beauty that eyes may never see.

Only the road and the dawn, the sun, the wind, the rain,
And the watch-fire under stars, and sleep, and the road
again.

We seek the city of God, and the haunt where beauty
dwells,
And we find the noisy mart and the sound of burial bells.

Never the golden city, where radiant people meet,
But the dolorous town where mourners are going about the
street.

We travel the dusty road till the light of the day is dim
And sunset shows us spires away on the world's rim.

We travel from dawn till dusk, till the day is past and by,
Seeking the Holy City beyond the rim of the sky.

Friends and loves we have none, nor wealth, nor blest
abode,
But the hope, the burning hope, and the road, the lonely
road.

John Masefield [18 —

THE BELEAGUERED CITY

I HAVE read, in some old, marvelous tale,
Some legend strange and vague,
That a midnight host of specters pale
Beleaguered the walls of Prague.

2754 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

Beside the Moldau's rushing stream,
With the wan moon overhead,
There stood, as in an awful dream,
The army of the dead.

White as the sea-fog, landward bound,
The spectral camp was seen,
And, with a sorrowful, deep sound,
The river flowed between.

No other voice nor sound was there,
No drum, nor sentry's pace;
The mist-like banners clasped the air,
As clouds with clouds embrace.

But when the old cathedral bell
Proclaimed the morning prayer,
The white pavilions rose and fell
On the alarmèd air.

Down the broad valley fast and far
The troubled army fled;
Up rose the glorious morning star,
The ghastly host was dead.

I have read, in the marvelous heart of man,
That strange and mystic scroll,
That an army of Phantoms vast and wan
Beleaguer the human soul.

Encamped beside Life's rushing stream,
In Fancy's misty light,
Gigantic shapes and shadows gleam
Portentous through the night.

Upon its midnight battle-ground
The spectral camp is seen,
And, with a sorrowful, deep sound,
Flows the River of Life between.

No other voice nor sound is there,
In the army of the grave;
No other challenge breaks the air,
But the rushing of Life's wave.

And when the solemn and deep church-bell
Entreats the soul to pray,
The midnight phantoms feel the spell,
The shadows sweep away.

Down the broad Vale of Tears afar
The spectral camp is fled;
Faith shineth as a morning star,
Our ghastly fears are dead.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow [1807-1882]

A DOUBTING HEART

WHERE are the swallows fled?
Frozen and dead
Perchance upon some bleak and stormy shore.
O doubting heart!
Far over purple seas
They wait, in sunny ease,
The balmy southern breeze,
To bring them to their northern homes once more.

Why must the flowers die?
Prisoned they lie
In the cold tomb, heedless of tears or rain.
O doubting heart!
They only sleep below
The soft white ermine snow
While winter winds shall blow,
To breathe and smile upon you soon again.

The sun has hid its rays
These many days;
Will dreary hours never leave the earth?
O doubting heart!
The stormy clouds on high
Veil the same sunny sky
That soon (for spring is nigh),
Shall wake the summer into golden mirth.

Fair hope is dead, and light
 Is quenched in night.
 What sound can break the silence of despair?
 O doubting heart!
 The sky is overcast,
 Yet stars shall rise at last,
 Brighter for darkness past,
 And angels' silver voices stir the air.

Adelaide Anne Procter [1825-1864]

VAIN VIRTUES

From "The House of Life"

WHAT is the sorriest thing that enters Hell?
None of the sins,—but this and that fair deed
Which a soul's sin at length could supersede.
These yet are virgins, whom death's timely knell
Might once have sainted; whom the fiends compel
Together now, in snake-bound shuddering sheaves
Of anguish, while the pit's pollution leaves
Their refuse maidenhood abominable.
Night sucks them down, the tribute of the pit,
Whose names, half entered in the book of Life,
Were God's desire at noon. And as their hair
And eyes sink last, the Torturer deigns no whit
To gaze, but, yearning, waits his destined wife,
The Sin still blithe on earth that sent them there.

Dante Gabriel Rossetti [1828-1882]

EVOLUTION

Out of the dusk a shadow,
Then, a spark;
Out of the cloud a silence,
Then, a lark;
Out of the heart a rapture,
Then, a pain;
Out of the dead, cold ashes,
Life again.

John Banister Tabb [1845-1909]

EACH IN HIS OWN TONGUE

A FIRE-MIST and a planet,—
 A crystal and a cell,—
 A jellyfish and a saurian,
 And caves where the cave-men dwell;
 Then a sense of law and beauty,
 And a face turned from the clod,—
 Some call it Evolution,
 And others call it God.

A haze on the far horizon,
 The infinite, tender sky,
 The ripe, rich tint of the cornfields,
 And the wild geese sailing high,—
 And all over upland and lowland
 The charm of the goldenrod,—
 Some of us call it Autumn,
 And others call it God.

Like tides on a crescent sea-beach,
 When the moon is new and thin,
 Into our hearts high yearnings
 Come welling and surging in,—
 Come from the mystic ocean,
 Whose rim no foot has trod,—
 Some of us call it Longing,
 And others call it God.

A picket frozen on duty,—
 A mother starved for her brood,—
 Socrates drinking the hemlock,
 And Jesus on the rood;
 And millions who, humble and nameless,
 The straight, hard pathway plod,—
 Some call it Consecration,
 And others call it God.

William Herbert Carruth [1859-

INDIRECTION

FAIR are the flowers and the children, but their subtle suggestion is fairer;
 Rare is the roseburst of dawn, but the secret that clasps it is rarer;
 Sweet the exultance of song, but the strain that precedes it is sweeter;
 And never was poem yet writ, but the meaning outmastered the meter.

Never a daisy that grows, but a mystery guideth the growing;
 Never a river that flows, but a majesty scepters the flowing;
 Never a Shakespeare that soared, but a stronger than he did enfold him,
 Nor ever a prophet foretells, but a mightier seer hath foretold him.

Back of the canvas that throbs the painter is hinted and hidden;
 Into the statue that breathes the soul of the sculptor is bidden;
 Under the joy that is felt lie the infinite issues of feeling;
 Crowning the glory revealed is the glory that crowns the revealing.

Great are the symbols of being, but that which is symbolized is greater;
 Vast the create and beheld, but vaster the inward creator;
 Back of the sound broods the silence, back of the gift stands the giving;
 Back of the hand that receives thrill the sensitive nerves of receiving.

Space is as nothing to spirit, the deed is outdone by the doing;
 The heart of the wooer is warm, but warmer the heart of the wooing;

And up from the pits where these shiver, and up from the
heights where those shine,
Twin voices and shadows swim starward, and the essence
of life is divine.

Richard Realf [1834-1878]

A GRAMMARIAN'S FUNERAL

SHORTLY AFTER THE REVIVAL OF LEARNING IN EUROPE

LET us begin and carry up this corpse,
Singing together.
Leave we the common crofts, the vulgar thorpes
Each in its tether
Sleeping safe on the bosom of the plain,
Cared-for till cock-crow:
Look out if yonder be not day again
Rimming the rock-row!
That's the appropriate country; there, man's thought,
Rarer, intenser,
Self-gathered for an outbreak, as it ought,
Chafes in the censer.
Leave we the unlettered plain its herd and crop;
Seek we sepulture
On a tall mountain, citied to the top,
Crowded with culture!
All the peaks soar, but one the rest excels;
Clouds overcome it;
No! yonder sparkle is the citadel's
Circling its summit.
Thither our path lies; wind we up the heights;
Wait ye the warning?
Our low life was the level's and the night's;
He's for the morning.
Step to a tune, square chests, erect each head.
'Ware the beholders!
This is our master, famous, calm and dead,
Borne on our shoulders.

2760 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

Sleep, crop and herd! sleep, darkling thorpe and croft,
 Safe from the weather!
 He, whom we convoy to his grave aloft,
 Singing together,
 He was a man born with thy face and throat,
 Lyric Apollo!
 Long he lived nameless: how should Spring take note
 Winter would follow?
 Till lo, the little touch, and youth was gone!
 Cramped and diminished,
 Moaned he, "New measures, other feet anon!
 My dance is finished"?
 No, that's the world's way: (keep the mountain-side,
 Make for the city!)
 He knew the signal, and stepped on with pride
 Over men's pity;
 Left play for work, and grappled with the world
 Bent on escaping:
 "What's in the scroll," quoth he, "thou keepest furled?
 Show me their shaping,
 Theirs who most studied man, the bard and sage,—
 Give!"—So, he gowned him,
 Straight got by heart that book to its last page:
 Learnèd, we found him.
 Yea, but we found him bald too, eyes like lead,
 Accents uncertain:
 "Time to taste life," another would have said,
 "Up with the curtain!"
 This man said rather, "Actual life comes next?
 Patience a moment!
 Grant I have mastered learning's crabbed text,
 Still there's the comment.
 Let me know all! Prate not of most or least,
 Painful or easy!
 Even to the crumbs I'd fain eat up the feast,
 Ay, nor feel queasy."
 Oh, such a life as he resolved to live,
 When he had learned it,
 When he had gathered all books had to give!
 Sooner, he spurned it.

Image the whole, then execute the parts—

Fancy the fabric

Quite, ere you build, ere steel strike fire from quartz,

Ere mortar dab brick!

(Here's the town-gate reached: there's the market-place
Gaping before us.)

Yea, this in him was the peculiar grace

(Hearten our chorus!)

That before living he'd learn how to live—

No end to learning:

Earn the means first—God surely will contrive

Use for our earning.

Others mistrust and say, "But time escapes:

Live now or never!"

He said, "What's time? Leave Now for dogs and apes!

Man has Forever."

Back to his book then: deeper drooped his head:

Calculus racked him:

Leaden before, his eyes grew dross of lead:

Tussis attacked him.

"Now, master, take a little rest!"—not he!

(Caution redoubled,

Step two abreast, the way winds narrowly!)

Not a whit troubled,

Back to his studies, fresher than at first,

Fierce as a dragon

He (soul-hydroptic with a sacred thirst)

Sucked at the flagon.

Oh, if we draw a circle premature,

Heedless of far gain,

Greedy for quick returns of profit, sure

Bad is our bargain!

Was it not great? did not he throw on God,

(He loves the burthen)—

God's task to make the heavenly period

Perfect the earthen?

Did not he magnify the mind, show clear

Just what it all meant?

He would not discount life, as fools do here,

Paid by instalment.

2762 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

He ventured neck or nothing—heaven's success
 Found, or earth's failure:
 "Wilt thou trust death or not?" He answered "Yes!
 Hence with life's pale lure!"
 That low man seeks a little thing to do,
 Sees it and does it:
 This high man, with a great thing to pursue,
 Dies ere he knows it.
 That low man goes on adding one to one,
 His hundred's soon hit:
 This high man, aiming at a million,
 Misses an unit.
 That, has the world here—should he need the next,
 Let the world mind him!
 This, throws himself on God, and unperplexed
 Seeking shall find him.
 So, with the throttling hands of death at strife,
 Ground he at grammar;
 Still, through the rattle, parts of speech were rife:
 While he could stammer
 He settled *Hoti's* business—let it be!—
 Properly based *Oun*—
 Gave us the doctrine of the enclitic *De*,
 Dead from the waist down.
 Well, here's the platform, here's the proper place:
 Hail to your purlieus,
 All ye highfliers of the feathered race,
 Swallows and curlews!
 Here's the top-peak; the multitude below
 Live, for they can, there:
 This man decided not to Live but Know—
 Bury this man there?
 Here—here's his place, where meteors shoot, clouds form,
 Lightnings are loosened,
 Stars come and go! Let joy break with the storm,
 Peace let the dew send!
 Lofty designs must close in like effects:
 Loftily lying,
 Leave him—still loftier than the world suspects,
 Living and dying.

Robert Browning [1812–1889]

THE RUBÁIYÁT OF OMAR KHÁYYÁM

WAKE! For the Sun who scattered into flight
The Stars before him from the Field of Night,
Drives Night along with them from Heaven, and strikes
The Sultán's Turret with a Shaft of Light.

Before the phantom of False morning died,
Methought a Voice within the Tavern cried,
"When all the Temple is prepared within,
Why nods the drowsy Worshiper outside?"

And, as the Cock crew, those who stood before
The Tavern shouted—"Open then the Door!
You know how little while we have to stay,
And, once departed, may return no more."

Now the New Year reviving old Desires,
The thoughtful Soul to Solitude retires,
Where the WHITE HAND OF MOSES on the Bough
Puts out, and Jesus from the ground suspires.

Iram indeed is gone with all his Rose,
And Jamshyd's Seven-ringed Cup where no one knows;
But still a Ruby kindles in the Vine,
And many a Garden by the Water blows.

And David's lips are locked; but in divine
High-piping Pehlevi, with "Wine! Wine! Wine!
Red Wine!"—the Nightingale cries to the Rose
That sallow cheek of hers t' incarnadine.

Come, fill the Cup, and in the fire of Spring
Your Winter-garment of Repentance fling:
The Bird of Time has but a little way
To flutter—and the Bird is on the Wing.

Whether at Naishápúr or Babylon,
Whether the Cup with sweet or bitter run,
The Wine of Life keeps oozing drop by drop,
The Leaves of Life keep falling one by one.

2764 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

Each Morn a thousand Roses brings, you say;
Yes, but where leaves the Rose of Yesterday?

And this first Summer month that brings the Rose
Shall take Jamshyd and Kaikobád away.

Well, let it take them! What have we to do
With Kaikobád the Great, or Kaikhosrú?

Let Zál and Rustum bluster as they will,
Or Hátim call to Supper—heed not you.

With me along the strip of Herbage strown
That just divides the desert from the sown,
Where name of Slave and Sultán is forgot—
And peace to Máhmúd on his golden Throne!

A Book of Verses underneath the Bough,
A Jug of Wine, a Loaf of Bread—and Thou
Beside me singing in the Wilderness—
Oh, Wilderness were Paradise enow!

Some for the Glories of this World; and some
Sigh for the Prophet's Paradise to come;
Ah, take the Cash, and let the Credit go,
Nor heed the rumble of a distant Drum!

Look to the blowing Rose about us—"Lo,
Laughing," she says, "into the world I blow,
At once the silken tassel of my Purse
Tear, and its Treasure on the Garden throw."

And those who husbanded the Golden grain,
And those who flung it to the winds like Rain,
Alike to no such aureate Earth are turned
As, buried once, Men want dug up again.

The Worldly Hope men set their Hearts upon
Turns Ashes—or it prospers; and anon,
Like Snow upon the Desert's dusty Face,
Lighting a little hour or two—was gone.

The Rubáiyát of Omar Kháyyám 2765

Think, in this battered caravanseraï
Whose Portals are alternate Night and Day,
How Sultán after Sultán with his Pomp
Abode his destined Hour, and went his way.

They say the Lion and the Lizard keep
The Courts where Jamshyd gloried and drank deep:
And Bahráñ, that great Hunter—the Wild Ass
Stamps o'er his Head, but cannot break his Sleep.

I sometimes think that never blows so red
The Rose as where some buried Cæsar bled;
That every Hyacinth the Garden wears
Dropped in her Lap from some once lovely Head.

And this reviving Herb whose tender Green
Fledges the River-Lip on which we lean—
Ah, lean upon it lightly! for who knows
From what once lovely Lip it springs unseen!

Ah, my Beloved, fill the Cup that clears
To-day of past Regret and future Fears:
To-morrow!—Why, To-morrow I may be
Myself with Yesterday's Seven thousand Years.

For some we loved, the loveliest and the best
That from his Vintage rolling Time hath pressed,
Have drunk their Cup a Round or two before,
And one by one crept silently to rest.

And we that now make merry in the Room
They left, and Summer dresses in new bloom,
Ourselves must we beneath the Couch of Earth
Descend—ourselves to make a Couch—for whom?

Ah, make the most of what we yet may spend,
Before we too into the Dust descend;
Dust into Dust, and under Dust, to lie,
Sans Wine, sans Song, sans Singer, and—sans End!

2766 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

Alike for those who for TO-DAY prepare,
And those that after some TO-MORROW stare,
A Muezzin from the Tower of Darkness cries,
"Fools! your Reward is neither Here nor There!"

Why, all the Saints and Sages who discussed
Of the two Worlds so wisely—they are thrust
Like foolish Prophets forth; their Words to Scorn
Are scattered, and their Mouths are stopped with Dust.

Myself when young did eagerly frequent
Doctor and Saint, and heard great argument
About it and about: but evermore
Came out by the same door where in I went.

With them the seed of Wisdom did I sow,
And with mine own hand wrought to make it grow;
And this was all the Harvest that I reaped—
"I came like Water, and like Wind I go."

Into this Universe, and *Why* not Knowing
Nor *Whence*, like Water willy-nilly flowing;
And out of it, as Wind along the Waste,
I know not *Whither*, willy-nilly blowing.

What, without asking, hither hurried *Whence*?
And, without asking, *Whither* hurried hence!
Oh, many a Cup of this forbidden Wine
Must drown the memory of that insolence!

Up from Earth's Center through the Seventh Gate
I rose, and on the Throne of Saturn sate,
And many a Knot unraveled by the Road;
But not the Master-knot of Human Fate.

There was the Door to which I found no Key;
There was the Veil through which I might not see;
Some little talk awhile of ME and THEE
There was—and then no more of THEE and ME.

The Rubáiyát of Omar Kháyyám 2767

Earth could not answer; nor the Seas that mourn
In flowing Purple, of their Lord forlorn;
Nor rolling Heaven, with all his Signs revealed
And hidden by the sleeve of Night and Morn.

Then of the THEE IN ME who works behind
The Veil, I lifted up my hands to find
A Lamp amid the Darkness; and I heard,
As from Without—"THE ME WITHIN THEE BLIND!"

Then to the Lip of this poor earthen Urn
I leaned, the Secret of my Life to learn:
And Lip to Lip it murmured—"While you live,
Drink!—for, once dead, you never shall return."

I think the Vessel, that with fugitive
Articulation answered, once did live,
And drink; and ah! the passive Lip I kissed,
How many Kisses might it take—and give!

For I remember stopping by the way
To watch a Potter thumping his wet Clay:
And with its all-obiterated Tongue
It murmured—"Gently, Brother, gently, pray!"

And has not such a Story from of Old
Down Man's successive generations rolled
Of such a cloud of saturated Earth
Cast by the Maker into Human mold?

And not a drop that from our Cups we throw
For Earth to drink of, but may steal below
To quench the fire of Anguish in some Eye
There hidden—far beneath, and long ago.

As then the Tulip for her morning sup
Of Heavenly Vintage from the soil looks up,
Do you devoutly do the like, till Heaven
To Earth invert you—like an empty Cup.

2768 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

Perplexed no more with Human or Divine,
To-morrow's tangle to the winds resign,
And lose your fingers in the tresses of
The Cypress-slender Minister of Wine.

And if the Wine you drink, the Lip you press,
End in what All begins and ends in—Yes;
Think then you are TO-DAY what YESTERDAY
You were—TO-MORROW you shall not be less.

So when the Angel of the darker Drink
At last shall find you by the river-brink,
And, offering his Cup, invite your Soul
Forth to your Lips to quaff—you shall not shrink.

Why, if the Soul can fling the Dust aside,
And naked on the Air of Heaven ride,
Wer't not a Shame—wer't not a Shame for him
In this clay carcase crippled to abide?

'Tis but a Tent where takes his one-day's rest
A Sultán to the realm of Death addressed;
The Sultán rises, and the dark Ferrásh
Strikes, and prepares it for another Guest.

And fear not lest Existence closing your
Account, and mine, should know the like no more
The Eternal Sáki from that Bowl has poured
Millions of Bubbles like us, and will pour.

When You and I behind the Veil are passed,
Oh, but the long, long while the World shall last,
Which of our Coming and Departure heeds
As the Sea's self should heed a pebble-cast.

A Moment's Halt—a momentary taste
Of BEING from the Well amid the Waste—
And Lo!—the phantom Caravan has reached
The NOTHING it set out from—Oh, make haste!

The Rubáiyát of Omar Kháyyám 2769

Would you that spangle of Existence spend
About **THE SECRET**—quick about it, Friend!

A Hair perhaps divides the False and True—
And upon what, prithee, does life depend?

A Hair perhaps divides the False and True;
Yes; and a single Alif were the clue—

Could you but find it—to the Treasure-house,
And peradventure to **THE MASTER** too:

Whose secret Presence, through Creation's veins
Running Quicksilver-like eludes your pains;

Taking all shapes from Máh to Máhi; and
They change and perish all—but He remains;

A moment guessed—then back behind the Fold
Immersed of Darkness round the Drama rolled

Which, for the Pastime of Eternity,
He doth Himself contrive, enact, behold.

But if in vain, down on the stubborn floor
Of Earth, and up to Heaven's unopening Door,

You gaze **TO-DAY**, while You are You—how then
TO-MORROW, You when shall be You no more?

Waste not your Hour, nor in the vain pursuit
Of This and That endeavor and dispute;

Better be jocund with the fruitful Grape
Than sadden after none, or bitter, Fruit.

You know, my Friends, with what a brave Carouse
I made a Second Marriage in my house;

Divorced old barren Reason from my Bed,
And took the Daughter of the Vine to Spouse.

For "**IS**" and "**IS-NOT**" though with Rule and Line,
And "**UP-AND-DOWN**" by Logic I define,

Of all that one should care to fathom, I
Was never deep in anything but—Wine.

2770 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

Ah, but my Computations, People say,
Reduced the Year to better reckoning?—Nay,
'Twas only striking from the Calendar
Unborn To-morrow, and dead Yesterday.

And lately, by the Tavern Door agape,
Came shining through the Dusk an Angel Shape
Bearing a Vessel on his Shoulder; and
He bid me taste of it; and 'twas—the Grape!

The Grape that can with Logic absolute
The Two-and-Seventy jarring Sects confute:
The sovereign Alchemist that in a trice
Life's leaden metal into Gold transmute:

The mighty Mahmúd, Allah-breathing Lord,
That all the misbelieving and black Horde
Of Fears and Sorrows that infest the Soul
Scatters before him with his whirlwind Sword.

Why, be this Juice the growth of God, who dare
Blaspheme the twisted tendril as a Snare?
A Blessing, we should use it, should we not?
And if a Curse—why, then, Who set it there?

I must abjure the Balm of Life, I must,
Scared by some After-reckoning ta'en on trust,
Or lured with Hope of some Diviner Drink,
To fill the Cup—when crumbled into Dust!

Oh threats of Hell and Hopes of Paradise!
One thing at least is certain—*This* Life flies:
One thing is certain and the rest is Lies;
The Flower that once has blown for ever dies.

Strange, is it not? that of the myriads who
Before us passed the door of Darkness through,
Not one returns to tell us of the Road,
Which to discover we must travel too.

The Rubáiyát of Omar Kháyyám 2771

The Revelations of Devout and Learned
Who rose before us, and as Prophets burned,
Are all but Stories, which, awoke from Sleep,
They told their comrades and to Sleep returned.

I sent my Soul through the Invisible
Some letter of that After-life to spell:
And by and by my Soul returned to me,
And answered, "I Myself am Heaven and Hell."

Heaven but the Vision of fulfilled Desire,
And Hell the Shadow from a Soul on fire
Cast on the Darkness into which Ourselves
So late emerged from, shall so soon expire.

We are no other than a moving row
Of Magic Shadow-shapes that come and go
Round with the Sun-illumined Lantern held
In Midnight by the Master of the Show;

But helpless Pieces of the Game He plays
Upon this Checker-board of Nights and Days;
Hither and thither moves, and checks, and slays,
And one by one back in the Closet lays.

The Ball no question makes of Ayes and Noes,
But Here or There, as strikes the Player, goes;
And He that tossed you down into the Field,
He knows about it all—HE knows—HE knows!

The Moving Finger writes; and, having writ,
Moves on: nor all your Piety nor Wit
Shall lure it back to cancel half a Line
Nor all your Tears wash out a Word of it

And that inverted Bowl they call the Sky,
Whereunder crawling cooped we live and die,
Lift not your hands to It for help—for It
As impotently moves as you or I.

2772 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

With Earth's first Clay They did the Last Man knead,
And there of the Last Harvest sowed the Seed;
And the first Morning of Creation wrote
What the Last Dawn of Reckoning shall read.

YESTERDAY *This* Day's Madness did prepare;
TO-MORROW's Silence, Triumph, or Despair:
Drink! for you know not whence you came, nor why:
Drink! for you know not why you go, nor where.

I tell you this—When, started from the Goal,
Over the flaming shoulders of the Foal
Of Heaven Parwin and Mushtari they flung,
In my predestined Plot of Dust and Soul

The Vine had struck a fiber: which about
If clings my Being—let the Dervish flout;
Of my Base metal may be filed a Key,
That shall unlock the Door he howls without.

And this I know: whether the one True Light
Kindle to Love, or Wrath consume me quite,
One flash of It within the Tavern caught
Better than in the Temple lost outright.

What! out of senseless Nothing to provoke
A conscious Something to resent the yoke
Of unpermitted Pleasure, under pain
Of Everlasting Penalties, if broke!

What! from his helpless Creature be repaid
Pure Gold for what he lent him dross-allayed—
Sue for a Debt we never did contract,
And cannot answer—Oh the sorry trade!

Oh Thou, who didst with pitfall and with gin
Beset the Road I was to wander in,
Thou wilt not with Predestined Evil round
Enmesh, and then impute my Fall to Sin!

The Rubáiyát of Omar Kháyyám 2773

Oh Thou, who Man of Baser Earth didst make,
And even with Paradise devise the Snake:
For all the Sin wherewith the Face of Man
Is blackened—Man's forgiveness give—and take!

.

As under cover of departing Day
Slunk hunger-stricken Ramazán away,
Once more within the Potter's house alone
I stood, surrounded by the Shapes of Clay.

Shapes of all Sorts and Sizes, great and small,
That stood along the floor and by the wall;
And some loquacious vessels were; and some
Listened perhaps, but never talked at all.

Said one among them—"Surely not in vain
My substance of the common Earth was ta'en
And to this Figure molded, to be broke,
Or trampled back to shapeless Earth again."

Then said a Second—"Ne'er a peevish Boy
Would break the Bowl from which he drank in Joy;
And He that with his hand the Vessel made
Will surely not in after Wrath destroy."

After a momentary silence spake
Some Vessel of a more ungainly make:
"They sneer at me for leaning all awry:
What! did the Hand then of the Potter shake?"

Whereat some one of the loquacious Lot—
I think a Súfi pipkin—waxing hot—
"All this of Pot and Potter—Tell me then,
Who is the Potter, pray, and who the Pot?"

"Why," said another, "Some there are who tell
Of one who threatens he will toss to Hell
The luckless Pots he marred in making—Pish!
He's a Good Fellow, and 'twill all be well."

2774 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

"Well," murmured one, "let whoso make or buy,
My Clay with long Oblivion is gone dry;
But fill me with the old familiar Juice,
Methinks I might recover by and by."

So while the Vessels one by one were speaking,
The little Moon looked in that all were seeking:
And then they jogged each other, "Brother! Brother!
Now for the Porter's shoulder-knot a-creaking!"

.

Ah, with the Grape my fading Life provide,
And wash the Body whence the Life has died,
And lay me, shrouded in the living Leaf,
By some not unfrequented Garden-side.

That even my buried Ashes such a snare
Of Vintage shall fling up into the Air
As not a True-believer passing by
But shall be overtaken unaware.

Indeed the Idols I have loved so long
Have done my credit in the World much wrong:
Have drowned my Glory in a shallow Cup,
And sold my reputation for a Song.

Indeed, indeed, Repentance oft before
I swore—but was I sober when I swore?
And then, and then came Spring, and Rose-in-hand
My thread-bare Penitence apieces tore.

And much as Wine has played the Infidel,
And robbed me of my Robe of Honor—Well,
I often wonder what the Vintners buy
One half so precious as the stuff they sell.

Yet Ah, that Spring should vanish with the Rose!
That Youth's sweet-scented manuscript should close!
The Nightingale that in the branches sang,
Ah whence, and whither flown again, who knows!

Would but the Desert of the Fountain yield
 One glimpse—if dimly, yet indeed, revealed,
 To which the fainting Traveler might spring,
 As springs the trampled herbage of the field!

Would but some wingèd Angel ere too late
 Arrest the yet unfolded Roll of Fate,
 And make the stern Recorder otherwise
 Enregister, or quite obliterate!

Ah Love! could you and I with Him conspire
 To grasp this sorry Scheme of Things entire,
 Would not we shatter it to bits—and then
 Remold it nearer to the Heart's desire!

.
 Yon rising Moon that looks for us again—
 How oft hereafter will she wax and wane;
 How oft hereafter rising look for us
 Through this same Garden—and for *one* in vain!

And when like her, oh Sákí, you shall pass
 Among the Guests Star-scattered on the Grass,
 And in your joyous errand reach the spot
 Where I made One—turn down an empty Glass!
 Edward Fitzgerald [1809-1883]

GAUDEAMUS IGITUR *

LET us live, then, and be glad
 While young life's before us!
 After youthful pastime had,
 After old age, hard and sad,
 Earth will slumber o'er us.

Where are they who in this world,
 Ere we kept, were keeping?
 Go ye to the gods above;
 Go to hell; inquire thereof:
 They are not: they're sleeping.

* For the original of this poem see page 3579.

2776 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

Brief is life, and brevity
Briefly shall be ended:
Death comes like a whirlwind strong,
Bears us with his blast along;
None shall be defended.

Live this university,
Men that learning nourish!
Live each member of the same,
Long live all that bear its name;
Let them ever flourish!

Live the commonwealth also,
And the men that guide it!
Live our town in strength and health,
Founders, patrons, by whose wealth
We are here provided!

Live all gods! A health to you,
Melting maids and beauteous!
Like the wives and women too,
Gentle, loving, tender, true,
Good, industrious, duteous!

Perish cares that pule and pine!
Perish envious blamers!
Die the Devil, thine and mine!
Die the starch-neck Philistine!
Scoffers and defamers!

*Translated from the Latin by
John Addington Symonds [1840-1893]*

LAURIGER HORATIUS *

LAUREL-CROWNED Horatius,
True, how true thy saying!
Swift as wind flies over us
Time, devouring, slaying.

* For the original of this poem see page 3581.

The Conclusion of the Whole Matter 2777

Where are, oh! those goblets full
Of wine, honey-laden,
Strifes and loves and bountiful
Lips of ruddy maiden?

Grows the young grape tenderly,
And the maid is growing;
But the thirsty poet, see,
Years on him are snowing!
What's the use on hoary curls
Of the bays undying,
If we may not kiss the girls,
Drink while time's a-flying?

Translated from the Latin by

John Addington Symonds [1840-1893]

THE CONCLUSION OF THE WHOLE MATTER

From "The House of a Hundred Lights"

THE Great Sword Bearer only knows just when He'll wound
my heart,—not I:
But since He is the one who gives the balm, what does it
signify?

If my Control should lose its hold on Fortune's collar through
some hurt,
What then?—Why then I'd simply cling to old gray Resigna-
tion's skirt.

Of all the languages of earth in which the human kind confer
The Master Speaker is the Tear: it is the Great Interpreter.

Man's life is like a tide that weaves the sea within its daily
web.

It rises, surges, swells, and grows,—a pause—then comes the
evening ebb.

In this rough field of earthly life I have reaped cause for
tears enough,
Yet, after all, I think I've gleaned my modicum of Laughing-
Stuff.

Frederic Ridgely Torrence [1875-

THE EARTH AND MAN

A LITTLE sun, a little rain,
 A soft wind blowing from the west—
 And woods and fields are sweet again,
 And warmth within the mountain's breast.

So simple is the earth we tread,
 So quick with love and life her frame:
 Ten thousand years have dawned and fled,
 And still her magic is the same.

A little love, a little trust,
 A soft impulse, a sudden dream—
 And life as dry as desert dust
 Is fresher than a mountain stream.

So simple is the heart of man,
 So ready for new hope and joy:
 Ten thousand years since it began
 Have left it younger than a boy.

Slopford Augustus Brooke [1832]

DESERVINGS

THIS is the height of our deserts:
 A little pity for life's hurts;
 A little rain, a little sun,
 A little sleep when work is done.

A little righteous punishment,
 Less for our deeds than their intent;
 A little pardon now and then,
 Because we are but struggling men.

A little light to show the way,
 A little guidance where we stray;
 A little love before we pass
 To rest beneath the kirkyard grass.

A little faith, in days of change,
When life is stark and bare and strange;
A solace when our eyes are wet
With tears of longing and regret.

True it is that we cannot claim
Unmeasured recompense or blame,
Because our way of life is small:
A little is the sum of all.

Unknown

“A LITTLE WORK”

From “Trilby”

A LITTLE work, a little play
To keep us going—and so, good-day!

A little warmth, a little light
Of love’s bestowing—and so, good-night!

A little fun, to match the sorrow
Of each day’s growing—and so, good-morrow!

A little trust that when we die
We reap our sowing! And so—good-bye!
George du Maurier [1834-1896]

THE CONDUCT OF LIFE

INTEGER VITÆ *

THE man of life upright,
Whose guiltless heart is free
From all dishonest deeds,
Or thought of vanity;

The man whose silent days
In harmless joys are spent,
Whom hope cannot delude,
Nor sorrow discontent;

That man needs neither towers
Nor armor for defense,
Nor secret vaults to fly
From thunder's violence:

He only can behold
With unaffrighted eyes
The horrors of the deep
And terrors of the skies.

Thus, scorning all the cares
That fate or fortune brings,
He makes the heaven his book,
His wisdom heavenly things;

Good thoughts his only friends,
His wealth a well-spent age,
The earth his sober inn
And quiet pilgrimage.

After Horace, by Thomas Campion [?—1616]

* For the original of this poem see page 3578.

THE CHAMBERED NAUTILUS

From "The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table"

THIS is the ship of pearl, which, poets feign,
Sails the unshadowed main,—
The venturous bark that flings
On the sweet summer wind its purpled wings
In gulfs enchanted, where the Siren sings,
And coral reefs lie bare,
Where the cold sea-maids rise to sun their streaming hair.

Its webs of living gauze no more unfurl;
Wrecked is the ship of pearl!
And every chambered cell,
Where its dim dreaming life was wont to dwell,
As the frail tenant shaped his growing shell,
Before thee lies revealed,—
Its irised ceiling rent, its sunless crypt unsealed!

Year after year beheld the silent toil
That spread his lustrous coil;
Still, as the spiral grew,
He left the past year's dwelling for the new,
Stole with soft step its shining archway through,
Built up its idle door,
Stretched in his last-found home, and knew the old no more.

Thanks for the heavenly message brought by thee,
Child of the wandering sea,
Cast from her lap, forlorn!
From thy dead lips a clearer note is born
Than ever Triton blew from wreathèd horn!
While on mine ear it rings,
Through the deep caves of thought I hear a voice that sings—

Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,
As the swift seasons roll!
Leave thy low-vaulted past!

2782 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

Let each new temple, nobler than the last,
Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,
Till thou at length art free,
Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's unresting sea!
Oliver Wendell Holmes [1809-1894]

A PSALM OF LIFE

WHAT THE HEART OF THE YOUNG MAN SAID TO THE PSALMIST

TELL me not, in mournful numbers,
Life is but an empty dream!—
For the soul is dead that slumbers,
And things are not what they seem.

Life is real! Life is earnest!
And the grave is not its goal;
Dust thou art, to dust returnest,
Was not spoken of the soul.

Not enjoyment, and not sorrow,
Is our destined end or way;
But to act, that each to-morrow
Find us farther than to-day.

Art is long, and Time is fleeting,
And our hearts, though stout and brave,
Still, like muffled drums, are beating
Funeral marches to the grave.

In the world's broad field of battle,
In the bivouac of Life,
Be not like dumb, driven cattle!
Be a hero in the strife!

Trust no Future, howe'er pleasant!
Let the dead Past bury its dead!
Act,—act in the living Present!
Heart within, and God o'erhead!

Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime,
And, departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time;

Footprints, that perhaps another,
Sailing o'er life's solemn main,
A forlorn and shipwrecked brother,
Seeing, shall take heart again.

Let us, then, be up and doing,
With a heart for any fate;
Still achieving, still pursuing,
Learn to labor and to wait.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow [1807-1882]

EXCELSIOR

THE shades of night were falling fast,
As through an Alpine village passed
A youth, who bore, 'mid snow and ice,
A banner with the strange device,
Excelsior!

His brow was sad; his eye beneath,
Flashed like a falchion from its sheath,
And like a silver clarion rung
The accents of that unknown tongue,
Excelsior!

In happy homes he saw the light
Of household fires gleam warm and bright;
Above, the spectral glaciers shone,
And from his lips escaped a groan,
Excelsior!

"Try not the Pass!" the old man said;
"Dark lowers the tempest overhead,
The roaring torrent is deep and wide!"
And loud that clarion voice replied,
Excelsior!

"Oh stay," the maiden said, "and rest
Thy weary head upon this breast!"
A tear stood in his bright blue eye,
But still he answered, with a sigh,
Excelsior!

"Beware the pine-tree's withered branch!
 Beware the awful avalanche!"
 This was the peasant's last Good-night,
 A voice replied, far up the height,
 Excelsior!

At break of day, as heavenward
 The pious monks of Saint Bernard
 Uttered the oft-repeated prayer,
 A voice cried through the startled air,
 Excelsior!

A traveler, by the faithful hound,
 Half buried in the snow was found,
 Still grasping in his hand of ice
 That banner with the strange device,
 Excelsior!

There in the twilight cold and gray,
 Lifeless, but beautiful, he lay,
 And from the sky, serene and far,
 A voice fell, like a falling star,
 Excelsior!

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow [1807-1882]

THE VILLAGE BLACKSMITH

UNDER a spreading chestnut-tree
 The village smithy stands;
 The smith, a mighty man is he,
 With large and sinewy hands;
 And the muscles of his brawny arms
 Are strong as iron bands.

His hair is crisp, and black, and long,
 His face is like the tan;
 His brow is wet with honest sweat,
 He earns whate'er he can,
 And looks the whole world in the face,
 For he owes not any man.

Week in, week out, from morn till night,
You can hear his bellows blow;
You can hear him swing his heavy sledge
With measured beat and slow,
Like a sexton ringing the village bell,
When the evening sun is low.

And children coming home from school
Look in at the open door;
They love to see the flaming forge,
And hear the bellows roar,
And catch the burning sparks that fly
Like chaff from a threshing-floor.

He goes on Sunday to the church,
And sits among his boys;
He hears the parson pray and preach,
He hears his daughter's voice,
Singing in the village choir,
And it makes his heart rejoice.

It sounds to him like her mother's voice,
Singing in Paradise!
He needs must think of her once more,
How in the grave she lies;
And with his hard, rough hand he wipes
A tear out of his eyes.

Toiling,—rejoicing,—sorrowing,
Onward through life he goes;
Each morning sees some task begin,
Each evening sees it close;
Something attempted, something done,
Has earned a night's repose.

Thanks, thanks to thee, my worthy friend,
For the lesson thou hast taught!
Thus at the flaming forge of life
Our fortunes must be wrought;
Thus on its sounding anvil shaped
Each burning deed and thought!

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow [1807-1882]

FOUR THINGS

FOUR things a man must learn to do
 If he would make his record true:
 To think without confusion clearly;
 To love his fellow-men sincerely;
 To act from honest motives purely;
 To trust in God and Heaven securely.

Henry Van Dyke [1852-

LABOR AND LOVE

LABOR and love! there are no other laws
 To rule the liberal action of that soul
 Which fate hath set beneath thy brief control,
 Or lull the empty fear that racks and gnaws;
 Labor! then like a rising moon, the cause
 Of life shall light thine hour from pole to pole,
 Thou shalt taste health of purpose, and the roll
 Of simple joys unwind without a pause.
 Love! and thy heart shall cease to question why
 Its beating pulse was set to rock and rave;
 Find but another heart this side the grave
 To soothe and cling to,—thou hast life's reply.
 Labor and love! then fade without a sigh,
 Submerged beneath the inexorable wave.

Edmund Gosse [1849-

WHAT IS GOOD

"WHAT is the real good?"
 I asked in musing mood.

Order, said the law court;
 Knowledge, said the school;
 Truth, said the wise man;
 Pleasure, said the fool;
 Love, said the maiden;
 Beauty, said the page;

Freedom, said the dreamer;
Home, said the sage;
Fame, said the soldier;
Equity, the seer;—

Spake my heart full sadly,
"The answer is not here."

Then within my bosom
Softly this I heard:
"Each heart holds the secret;
Kindness is the word."

John Boyle O'Reilly [1844-1890]

FAITH

BETTER trust all and be deceived,
And weep that trust and that deceiving,
Than doubt one heart that, if believed,
Had blessed one's life with true believing.

Oh, in this mocking world, too fast
The doubting fiend o'ertakes our youth;
Better be cheated to the last
Than lose the blessed hope of truth.

Frances Anne Kemble [1809-1893]

A CHARGE

If thou hast squandered years to grave a gem
Commissioned by thy absent Lord, and while
 'Tis incomplete,
Others would bribe thy needy skill to them—
Dismiss them to the street!

Should'st thou at last discover Beauty's grove,
At last be panting on the fragrant verge,
 But in the track,
Drunk with divine possession, thou meet Love—
Turn, at her bidding, back.

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When round thy ship in tempest Hell appears,
And every specter mutters up more dire
To snatch control
And loose to madness thy deep-kenneled Fears—
Then to the helm, O Soul!

Last, if upon the cold, green-mantling sea,
Thou cling, alone with Truth, to the last spar,
Both castaway,
And one must perish—let it not be he
Whom thou art sworn to obey.

Herbert Trench [1865—

TO-DAY

So here hath been dawning
Another blue Day:
Think, wilt thou let it
Slip useless away?

Out of Eternity
This new Day is born;
Into Eternity,
At night, will return.

Behold it aforetime
No eye ever did:
So soon it for ever
From all eyes is hid.

Here hath been dawning
Another blue Day:
Think, wilt thou let it
Slip useless away?

Thomas Carlyle [1795–1881]

“MY DAYS AMONG THE DEAD ARE PASSED”

My days among the Dead are passed,
Around me I behold,
Where'er these casual eyes are cast,
The mighty minds of old:

My never-failing friends are they,
With whom I converse day by day.

With them I take delight in weal,
And seek relief in woe;
And while I understand and feel
How much to them I owe,
My cheeks have often been bedewed
With tears of thoughtful gratitude.

My thoughts are with the Dead; with them
I live in long-past years,
Their virtues love, their faults condemn,
Partake their hopes and fears;
And from their lessons seek and find
Instruction with an humble mind.

My hopes are with the Dead; anon
My place with them will be,
And I with them shall travel on
Through all Futurity;
Yet leaving here a name, I trust,
That will not perish in the dust.

Robert Southey [1774-1843]

OPPORTUNITY

MASTER of human destinies am I!
Fame, love, and fortune on my footsteps wait.
Cities and fields I walk; I penetrate
Deserts and seas remote, and passing by
Hovel and mart and palace—soon or late
I knock unbidden once at every gate!

If sleeping, wake—if feasting, rise before
I turn away. It is the hour of fate,
And they who follow me reach every state
Mortals desire, and conquer every foe

Save death; but those who doubt or hesitate,
 Condemned to failure, penury, and woe,
 Seek me in vain and uselessly implore.
 I answer not, and I return no more!

John James Ingalls [1833-1900]

OPPORTUNITY

THEY do me wrong who say I come no more
 When once I knock and fail to find you in;
 For every day I stand outside your door
 And bid you wake, and rise to fight and win.

Wail not for precious chances passed away!
 Weep not for golden ages on the wane!
 Each night I burn the records of the day—
 At sunrise every soul is born again!

Dost thou behold thy lost youth all aghast?
 Dost reel from righteous Retribution's blow?
 Then turn from blotted archives of the past
 And find the future's pages white as snow.

Art thou a mourner? Rouse thee from thy spell;
 Art thou a sinner? Sins may be forgiven;
 Each morning gives thee wings to flee from hell,
 Each night a star to guide thy feet to heaven.

Laugh like a boy at splendors that have sped,
 To vanished joys be blind and deaf and dumb;
 My judgments seal the dead past with its dead,
 But never bind a moment yet to come.

Though deep in mire, wring not your hands and weep;
 I lend my arm to all who say "I can!"
 No shame-faced outcast ever sank so deep
 But yet might rise and be again a man!

Walter Malone [1866-]

OPPORTUNITY

THIS I beheld, or dreamed it in a dream:—
 There spread a cloud of dust along a plain;
 And underneath the cloud, or in it, raged
 A furious battle, and men yelled, and swords
 Shocked upon swords and shields. A prince's banner
 Wavered, then staggered backward, hemmed by foes.
 A craven hung along the battle's edge,
 And thought, "Had I a sword of keener steel—
 That blue blade that the king's son bears,—but this
 Blunt thing!" he snapped and flung it from his hand,
 And lowering crept away and left the field.
 Then came the king's son, wounded, sore bestead,
 And weaponless, and saw the broken sword,
 Hilt-buried in the dry and trodden sand,
 And ran and snatched it, and with battle-shout
 Lifted afresh he hewed his enemy down,
 And saved a great cause that heroic day.

Edward Rowland Sill [1841-1887]

THE ARROW AND THE SONG

I SHOT an arrow into the air,
 It fell to earth, I knew not where;
 For, so swiftly it flew, the sight
 Could not follow it in its flight.

I breathed a song into the air,
 It fell to earth, I knew not where;
 For who has sight so keen and strong,
 That it can follow the flight of song?

Long, long afterward, in an oak
 I found the arrow, still unbroke;
 And the song, from beginning to end,
 I found again in the heart of a friend.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow [1807-1882]

CALUMNY

A WHISPER woke the air,
 A soft, light tone, and low,
 Yet barbed with shame and woe.
 Ah! might it only perish there,
 Nor farther go!

But no! a quick and eager ear
 Caught up the little, meaning sound;
 Another voice has breathed it clear;
 And so it wandered round
 From ear to lip, from lip to ear,
 Until it reached a gentle heart
 That throbbed from all the world apart
 And that—it broke!

It was the only heart it found,—
 The only heart 'twas meant to find,
 When first its accents woke.
 It reached that gentle heart at last,
 And that—it broke!

Frances Sargent Osgood [1811-1850]

THE EFFECT OF EXAMPLE

WE scatter seeds with careless hand,
 And dream we ne'er shall see them more;
 But for a thousand years
 Their fruit appears,
 In weeds that mar the land,
 Or healthful shore.

The deeds we do, the words we say,—
 Into still air they seem to fleet,
 We count them ever past;
 But they shall last,—
 In the dread judgment they
 And we shall meet.

I charge thee by the years gone by,
For the love's sake of brethren dear,
Keep thou the one true way,
In work and play,
Lest in that world their cry
Of woe thou hear.

John Keble [1792-1866]

LITTLE AND GREAT

A TRAVELER on a dusty road
Strewed acorns on the lea;
And one took root and sprouted up,
And grew into a tree.
Love sought its shade at evening-time,
To breathe its early vows;
And Age was pleased, in heats of noon,
To bask beneath its boughs.
The dormouse loved its dangling twigs,
The birds sweet music bore—
It stood a glory in its place,
A blessing evermore.

A little spring had lost its way
Amid the grass and fern;
A passing stranger scooped a well
Where weary men might turn;
He walled it in, and hung with care
A ladle at the brink;
He thought not of the deed he did,
But judged that Toil might drink.
He passed again; and lo! the well,
By summer never dried,
Had cooled ten thousand parchèd tongues,
And saved a life beside.

A dreamer dropped a random thought;
'Twas old, and yet 'twas new;
A simple fancy of the brain,
But strong in being true.

It shone upon a genial mind,
 And, lo! its light became
 A lamp of life, a beacon ray,
 A monitory flame:
 The thought was small; its issue great;
 A watch-fire on the hill,
 It sheds its radiance far adown,
 And cheers the valley still.

A nameless man, amid the crowd
 That thronged the daily mart,
 Let fall a word of hope and love,
 Unstudied from the heart;—
 A whisper on the tumult thrown,
 A transitory breath,—
 It raised a brother from the dust,
 It saved a soul from death.
 O germ! O fount! O word of love!
 O thought at random cast!
 Ye were but little at the first,
 But mighty at the last.

Charles Mackay [1814-1889]

THE SIN OF OMISSION

It isn't the thing you do, dear;
 It's the thing you leave undone,
 Which gives you a bit of heartache
 At the setting of the sun.
 The tender word forgotten,
 The letter you did not write,
 The flower you might have sent, dear,
 Are your haunting ghosts to-night.

The stone you might have lifted
 Out of a brother's way,
 The bit of heartsome counsel
 You were hurried too much to say;

The loving touch of the hand, dear,
 The gentle and winsome tone,
 That you had no time nor thought for,
 With troubles enough of your own.

The little acts of kindness,
 So easily out of mind;
 Those chances to be angels
 Which every one may find—
 They come in night and silence—
 Each chill, reproachful wraith—
 When hope is faint and flagging
 And a blight has dropped on faith.

For life is all too short, dear,
 And sorrow is all too great;
 So suffer our great compassion
 That tarries until too late;
 And it's not the thing you do, dear,
 It's the thing you leave undone,
 Which gives you the bit of heartache
 At the setting of the sun.

Margaret Sangster [1838-

THE FLOWER

ONCE in a golden hour
 I cast to earth a seed.
 Up there came a flower,
 The people said, a weed.

To and fro they went
 Through my garden-bower,
 And muttering discontent
 Cursed me and my flower.

Then it grew so tall
 It wore a crown of light,
 But thieves from o'er the wall
 Stole the seed by night;

Sowed it far and wide
 By every town and tower,
 Till all the people cried,
 "Splendid is the flower."

Read my little fable:
 He that runs may read.
 Most can raise the flowers now,
 For all have got the seed.

And some are pretty enough,
 And some are poor indeed;
 And now again the people
 Call it but a weed.

Alfred Tennyson [1809-1892]

STANZAS

OFTEN rebuked, yet always back returning
 To those first feelings that were born with me,
 And leaving busy chase of wealth and learning
 For idle dreams of things that cannot be:

To-day, I will seek not the shadowy region;
 Its unsustaining vastness waxes drear;
 And visions rising, legion after legion,
 Bring the unreal world too strangely near.

I'll walk, but not in old heroic traces,
 And not in paths of high morality,
 And not among the half-distinguished faces,
 The clouded forms of long-past history.

I'll walk where my own nature would be leading:
 It vexes me to choose another guide:
 Where the gray flocks in ferny glens are feeding;
 Where the wild wind blows on the mountain side.

What have those lonely mountains worth revealing?
 More glory and more grief than I can tell:
 The earth that wakes *one* human heart to feeling
 Can center both the worlds of Heaven and Hell.

Emily Brontë [1818-1848]

THE LESSON OF THE WATER-MILL

LISTEN to the Water-Mill;
Through the live-long day
How the clicking of its wheel
Wears the hours away!
Languidly the Autumn wind
Stirs the forest leaves,
From the field the reapers sing,
Binding up their sheaves;
And a proverb haunts my mind
As a spell is cast,
"The mill cannot grind
With the water that is past."

Autumn winds revive no more
Leaves that once are shed,
And the sickle cannot reap
Corn once gathered;
Flows the ruffled streamlet on,
Tranquil, deep, and still,
Never gliding back again
To the water-mill;
Truly speaks the proverb old,
With a meaning vast,—
"The mill cannot grind
With the water that is past."

Take the lesson to thyself
True and loving heart;
Golden youth is fleeting by,
Summer hours depart;
Learn to make the most of life,
Lose no happy day,
Time will never bring thee back
Chances swept away!
Leave no tender word unsaid,
Love while love shall last;
"The mill cannot grind
With the water that is past."

Work while yet the daylight shines,
Man of strength and will!
Never does the streamlet glide
Useless by the mill;
Wait not till to-morrow's sun
Beams upon thy way,
All that thou canst call thine own
Lies in thy "to-day";
Power and intellect and health
May not always last,
"The mill cannot grind
With the water that is past."

O the wasted hours of life
That have drifted by!
O the good that might have been,—
Lost, without a sigh!
Love, that we might once have saved
By a single word,
Thoughts conceived, but never penned,
Perishing unheard;—
Take the proverb to thine heart,
Take, and hold it fast,—
“The mill cannot grind
With the water that is past.”

Sarah Doudney [1843-

LIFE

I MADE a posy, while the day ran by:
Here will I smell my remnant out, and tie
My life within this band.
But Time did beckon to the flowers, and they
By noon most cunningly did steal away,
And withered in my hand.

My hand was next to them, and then my heart;
I took, without more thinking, in good part
Time's gentle admonition;

Who did so sweetly Death's sad taste convey,
 Making my mind to smell my fatal day,
 Yet sugaring the suspicion.

Farewell, dear flowers! sweetly your time ye spent,
 Fit, while ye lived, for smell or ornament,
 And after death for cures.
 I follow straight, without complaints or grief;
 Since, if my scent be good, I care not if
 It be as short as yours.
George Herbert [1593-1633]

BE TRUE

THOU must be true thyself,
 If thou the truth wouldst teach;
 Thy soul must overflow, if thou
 Another's soul wouldst reach!
 It needs the overflow of heart
 To give the lips full speech.

Think truly, and thy thoughts
 Shall the world's famine feed;
 Speak truly, and each word of thine
 Shall be a fruitful seed;
 Live truly, and thy life shall be
 A great and noble creed.

Horatius Bonar [1808-1889]

TO-DAY

WHY fear to-morrow, timid heart?
 Why tread the future's way?
 We only need to do our part
 To-day, dear child, to-day.

The past is written! Close the book
 On pages sad and gay;
 Within the future do not look,
 But live to-day—to-day.

2800 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

'Tis this one hour that God has given;
His Now we must obey;
And it will make our earth his heaven
To live to-day—to-day.

Lydia Avery Coonley Ward [1845—

THE VALLEY OF VAIN VERSES

THE grief that is but feigning,
And weeps melodious tears
Of delicate complaining
From self-indulgent years;
The mirth that is but madness,
And has no inward gladness
Beneath its laughter, straining
To capture thoughtless ears;

The love that is but passion
Of amber-scented lust;
The doubt that is but fashion;
The faith that has no trust;—
These Thamyris disperses,
In the Valley of Vain Verses
Below the Mount Parnassian,
And they crumble into dust.

Henry Van Dyke [1852—

A THANKSGIVING

LORD, for the erring thought
Not unto evil wrought;
Lord, for the wicked will
Betrayed and baffled still;
For the heart from itself kept:
Our Thanksgiving accept!

For ignorant hopes that were
Broken to our blind prayer;
For pain, death, sorrow—sent
Unto our chastisement;

For all loss of seeming good:
Quicken our gratitude!

William Dean Howells [1837—

THE LADY POVERTY

THE Lady Poverty was fair:
But she has lost her looks of late,
With change of times and change of air.
Ah slattern, she neglects her hair,
Her gown, her shoes. She keeps no state
As once when her pure feet were bare.

Or—almost worse, if worse can be—
She scolds in parlors; dusts and trims,
Watches and counts. Oh, is this she
Whom Francis met, whose step was free,
Who with Obedience carol'd hymns,
In Umbria walked with Chastity?

Where is her ladyhood? Not here,
Not among modern kinds of men;
But in the stony fields, where clear
Through the thin trees the skies appear;
In delicate spare soil and fen,
And slender landscape and austere.

Alice Meynell [1853—

THE LADY POVERTY

I MET her on the Umbrian Hills,
Her hair unbound, her feet unshod;
As one whom secret glory fills
She walked—alone with God.

I met her in the city street;
Oh, how changed was her aspect then!
With heavy eyes and weary feet
She walked alone—with men.

Jacob Fischer [18 —

THE PRAYER OF BEATEN MEN

From "The House of Broken Swords"

We are the fallen, who, with helpless faces
 Low in the dust, in stiffening ruin lay,
 Felt the hoof's beat, and heard the rattling traces
 As o'er us drove the chariots of the fray.

We are the fallen, who by ramparts gory,
 Awaiting death, heard the far shouts begin,
 And with our last glance glimpsed the victor's glory
 For which we died, but dying might not win.

We were but men. Always our eyes were holden,
 We could not read the dark that walled us round,
 Nor deem our futile plans with thine enfolden—
 We fought, not knowing God was on the ground.

Give us our own; and though in realms eternal
 The potsherd and the pot, belike, are one,
 Make our old world to know that with supernal
 Powers we were matched, and by the stars o'erthrown.

Ay, grant our ears to hear the foolish praising
 Of men—old voices of our lost home-land,
 Or else, the gateways of this dim world raising,
 Give us our swords again, and hold thy hand.

William Hervey Woods [1852—

THE LAST WORD

CREEP into thy narrow bed,
 Creep, and let no more be said!
 Vain thy onset! all stands fast.
 Thou thyself must break at last.

Let the long contention cease!
 Geese are swans, and swans are geese,
 Let them have it how they will!
 Thou art tired; best be still.

They out-talked thee, hissed thee, tore thee?
 Better men fared thus before thee;
 Fired their ringing shot and passed,
 Hotly charged—and sank at last.

Charge once more, then, and be dumb!
 Let the victors, when they come,
 When the forts of folly fall,
 Find thy body by the wall!

Matthew Arnold [1822-1888]

IO VICTIS

From "He and She"

I SING the hymn of the conquered, who fell in the Battle of
 Life,
 The hymn of the wounded, the beaten, who died over-
 whelmed in the strife;
 Not the jubilant song of the victors, for whom the resound-
 ing acclaim
 Of nations was lifted in chorus, whose brows wore the chap-
 let of fame,
 But the hymn of the low and the humble, the weary, the
 broken in heart,
 Who strove and who failed, acting bravely a silent and des-
 perate part;
 Whose youth bore no flower on its branches, whose hopes
 burned in ashes away,
 From whose hands slipped the prize they had grasped at,
 who stood at the dying of day
 With the wreck of their life all around them, unpitied, un-
 heeded, alone,
 With Death swooping down o'er their failure, and all but
 their faith overthrown,
 While the voice of the world shouts its chorus—its pæan for
 those who have won;
 While the trumpet is sounding triumphant and high to the
 breeze and the sun

2804 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

Glad banners are waving, hands clapping and hurrying feet
 Thronging after the laurel-crowned victors, I stand on the
 field of defeat
 In the shadow, with those who are fallen, and wounded, and
 dying, and there
 Chant a requiem low, place my hand on their pain-knotted
 brows, breathe a prayer,
 Hold the hand that is helpless and whisper, "They only the
 victory win
 Who have fought the good fight and have vanquished the
 demon that tempts us within,
 Who have held to their faith unseduced by the prize that the
 world holds on high,
 Who have dared for a high cause to suffer, resist, fight—if
 need be, to die."
 Speak, History! Who are life's victors? Unroll the long
 annals and say,
 Are they those whom the world called the victors,—who
 won the success of a day?
 The martyrs, or Nero? The Spartans who fell at Ther-
 mopylæ's tryst,
 Or the Persians and Xerxes? His judges, or Socrates?
 Pilate, or Christ?

William Wetmore Story [1819-1895]

"THEY WENT FORTH TO BATTLE BUT THEY
 ALWAYS FELL"

THEY went forth to battle but they always fell;
 Their eyes were fixed above the sullen shields;
 Nobly they fought and bravely, but not well,
 And sank heart-wounded by a subtle spell.
 They knew not fear that to the foeman yields,
 They were not weak, as one who vainly wields
 A futile weapon; yet the sad scrolls tell
 How on the hard-fought field they always fell.

It was a secret music that they heard,
 A sad sweet plea for pity and for peace;
 And that which pierced the heart was but a word,
 Though the white breast was red-lipped where the sword

Pressed a fierce cruel kiss, to put surcease
On its hot thirst, but drank a hot increase.
Ah, they by some strange troubling doubt were stirred,
And died for hearing what no foeman heard.

They went forth to battle but they always fell:
Their might was not the might of lifted spears;
Over the battle-clamor came a spell
Of troubling music, and they fought not well.
Their wreaths are willows and their tribute, tears;
Their names are old sad stories in men's ears;
Yet they will scatter the red hordes of Hell,
Who went to battle forth and always fell.

Shaemas O Sheel [18 -

THE MASTERS

OH, Masters, you who rule the world,
Will you not wait with me awhile,
When swords are sheathed and sails are furled,
And all the fields with harvest smile?
I would not waste your time for long,
I ask you but, when you are tired,
To read how by the weak, the strong
Are weighed and worshiped and desired.

When weary of the Mart, the Loom,
The Withering-house, the Riffle-blocks,
The Barrack-square, the Engine-room,
The pick-axe, ringing on the rocks,—
When tents are pitched and work is done,
While restful twilight broods above,
By fresh-lit lamp, or dying sun,
See in my songs how women love.

We shared your lonely watch by night,
We knew you faithful at the helm,
Our thoughts went with you through the fight,
That saved a soul,—or wrecked a realm;

2806 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

Ah, how our hearts leapt forth to you,
In pride and joy, when you prevailed,
And when you died, serene and true:
—We wept in silence when you failed!

Oh, brain, that did not gain the gold!
Oh, arm, that could not wield the sword,
Here is the love, that is not sold,
Here are the hearts to hail you Lord!

You played and lost the game? What then?
The rules are harsh and hard, we know;
You, still, oh, brothers, are the men
Whom we in secret reverence so.
Your work was waste? Maybe your share
Lay in the hour you laughed and kissed;
Who knows but that your son shall wear
The laurels that his father missed?

Ay, you who win, and you who lose,
Whether you triumph,—or despair,—
When your returning footsteps choose
The homeward track, our love is there.
For, since the world is ordered thus,
To you, the fame, the stress, the sword,
We can but wait, until to us
You give yourselves, for our reward.

To Whaler's deck and Coral beach,
To lonely Ranch and Frontier-Fort,
Beyond the narrow bounds of speech
I lay the cable of my thought.
I fain would send my thanks to you,
(Though who am I, to give you praise?)
Since what you are, and work you do
Are lessons for our easier ways.

'Neath alien stars your camp-fires glow,
I know you not,—your tents are far.
My hope is but in song to show
How honored and how dear you are.

Laurence Hope [1865-1904]

THE KINGS

A MAN said unto his Angel:
 "My spirits are fallen low,
 And I cannot carry this battle:
 O brother! where might I go?

"The terrible Kings are on me
 With spears that are deadly bright;
 Against me so from the cradle
 Do fate and my fathers fight."

Then said to the man his Angel:
 "Thou wavering witless soul,
 Back to the ranks! What matter
 To win or to lose the whole,

"As judged by the little judges
 Who hearken not well, nor see?
 Not thus, by the outer issue,
 The Wise shall interpret thee.

"Thy will is the sovereign measure
 And only event of things:
 The puniest heart, defying,
 Were stronger than all these Kings.

"Though out of the past they gather,
 Mind's Doubt and Bodily Pain,
 And pallid Thirst of the Spirit
 That is kin to the other twain,

"And Grief, in a cloud of banners,
 And ringleted Vain Desires,
 And Vice with the spoils upon him
 Of thee and thy beaten sires,—

"While Kings of eternal evil
 Yet darken the hills about,
 Thy part is with broken saber
 To rise on the last redoubt;

"To fear not sensible failure,
 Nor covet the game at all,
 But fighting, fighting, fighting,
 Die, driven against the wall!"

Louise Imogen Guiney [1861—

FAILURES

THEY bear no laurels on their sunless brows,
 Nor aught within their pale hands as they go;
 They look as men accustomed to the slow
 And level onward course 'neath drooping boughs.
 Who may these be no trumpet doth arouse,
 These of the dark processional of woe,
 Unpraised, unblamed, but whom sad Acheron's flow
 Monotonously lulls to leaden drowse?
 These are the Failures. Clutched by Circumstance,
 They were—say not too weak!—too ready prey
 To their own fear whose fixed Gorgon glance
 Made them as stone for aught of great essay;—
 Or else they nodded when their Master-Chance
 Wound his one signal, and went on his way.

Arthur Upson [1877—1908]

THE MEN OF OLD

I KNOW not that the men of old
 Were better than men now,
 Of heart more kind, of hand more bold,
 Of more ingenuous brow:
 I heed not those who pine for force
 A ghost of Time to raise,
 As if they thus could check the course
 Of these appointed days.

Still it is true, and over-true,
 That I delight to close
 This book of life self-wise and new,
 And let my thoughts repose

On all that humble happiness,
The world has since foregone,—
The daylight of contentedness
That on those faces shone!

With rights, though not too closely scanned,
Enjoyed, as far as known,—
With will by no reverse unmanned,—
With pulse of even tone,—
They from to-day and from to-night
Expected nothing more,
Than yesterday and yesternight
Had proffered them before.

To them was life a simple art
Of duties to be done,
A game where each man took his part,
A race where all must run;
A battle whose great scheme and scope
They little cared to know,
Content, as men at arms, to cope
Each with his fronting foe.

Man now his Virtue's diadem
Puts on, and proudly wears,—
Great thoughts, great feelings, came to them,
Like instincts, unawares:
Blending their souls' sublimest needs
With tasks of every day,
They went about their gravest deeds,
As noble boys at play.—

And what if Nature's fearful wound
They did not probe and bare,
For that their spirits never swooned
To watch the misery there,—
For that their love but flowed more fast,
Their charities more free,
Not conscious what mere drops they cast
Into the evil sea.

2810 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

A man's best things are nearest him,
Lie close about his feet;
It is the distant and the dim
That we are sick to greet;
For flowers that grow our hands beneath
We struggle and aspire.—
Our hearts must die, except they breathe
The air of fresh Desire.

Yet, Brothers, who up Reason's hill
Advance with hopeful cheer,—
Oh! loiter not, those heights are chill,
As chill as they are clear;
And still restrain your haughty gaze,
The loftier that ye go,
Remembering distance leaves a haze
On all that lies below.

Richard Monckton Milnes [1809-1885]

DON QUIXOTE

BEHIND thy pasteboard, on thy battered hack,
Thy lean cheek striped with plaster to and fro,
Thy long spear leveled at the unseen foe,
And doubtful Sancho trudging at thy back,
Thou wert a figure strange enough, good lack!
To make Wiseacredom, both high and low,
Rub purblind eyes, and (having watched thee go),
Dispatch its Dogberrys upon thy track:
Alas! poor Knight! Alas! poor soul possessed!
Yet would to-day, when Courtesy grows chill,
And life's fine loyalties are turned to jest,
Some fire of thine might burn within us still!
Ah! would but one might lay his lance in rest,
And charge in earnest—were it but a mill.

Austin Dobson [1840-

A PRAYER

LORD, not for light in darkness do we pray,
Not that the veil be lifted from our eyes,
Nor that the slow ascension of our day
Be otherwise.

Not for a clearer vision of the things
Whereof the fashioning shall make us great,
Nor for remission of the peril and stings
Of time and fate.

Not for a fuller knowledge of the end
Whereto we travel, bruised yet unafraid,
Nor that the little healing that we lend
Shall be repaid.

Not these, O Lord. We would not break the bars
Thy wisdom sets about us; we shall climb
Unfettered to the secrets of the stars
In thy good time.

We do not crave the high perception swift
When to refrain were well, and when fulfil,
Nor yet the understanding strong to sift
The good from ill.

Not these, O Lord. For these thou hast revealed.
We know the golden season when to reap
The heavy-fruited treasure of the field,
The hour to sleep.

Not these. We know the hemlock from the rose,
The pure from stained, the noble from the base,
The tranquil holy light of truth that glows
On Pity's face.

We know the paths wherein our feet should press,
Across our hearts are written thy decrees.
Yet now, O Lord, be merciful to bless
With more than these.

2812 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

Grant us the will to fashion as we feel,
Grant us the strength to labor as we know,
Grant us the purpose, ribbed and edged with steel,
To strike the blow.

Knowledge we ask not—knowledge thou hast lent;
But Lord, the will—there lies our bitter need.
Give us to build above the deep intent
The deed, the deed.

John Drinkwater [18 -

BATTLE CRY

MORE than half beaten, but fearless,
Facing the storm and the night;
Breathless and reeling, but tearless,
Here in the lull of the fight,
I who bow not but before Thee,
God of the fighting Clan,
Lifting my fists I implore Thee,
Give me the heart of a Man!

What though I live with the winners,
Or perish with those who fall?
Only the cowards are sinners,
Fighting the fight is all.
Strong is my Foe—he advances!
Snapped is my blade, O Lord!
See the proud banners and lances!
O spare me this stub of a sword!

Give me no pity, nor spare me;
Calm not the wrath of my Foe.
See where he beckons to dare me!
Bleeding, half-beaten—I go.
Not for the glory of winning,
Not for the fear of the night
Shunning the battle is sinning—
O spare me the heart to fight!

Red is the mist about me;
 Deep is the wound in my side;
 "Coward" thou criest to flout me?
 O terrible Foe, thou hast lied!
 Here with my battle before me,
 God of the fighting Clan,
 Grant that the woman who bore me
 Suffered to suckle a man!

John G. Neihardt [1881—

RABIA

RABIA, sick upon her bed,
 By two saints was visited,—

Holy Malik, Hassan wise—
 Men of mark in Moslem eyes.

Hassan says, "Whose prayer is pure,
 Will God's chastisement endure."

Malik, from a deeper sense
 Uttered his experience:

"He who loves his Master's choice
 Will in chastisement rejoice."

Rabia saw some selfish will
 In their maxims lingering still,

And replied, "O men of grace!
 He who sees his Master's face

Will not, in his prayer, recall
 That he is chastised at all."

From the Arabic, by James Freeman Clarke [1810-1888]

THE JOYFUL WISDOM

From "The Angel in the House"

WOULD Wisdom for herself be wooed,
 And wake the foolish from his dream,
 She must be glad as well as good,
 And must not only be, but seem.

Beauty and joy are hers by right;
 And, knowing this, I wonder less
 That she's so scorned, when falsely dight
 In misery and ugliness.
 What's that which Heaven to man endears,
 And that which eyes no sooner see
 Than the heart says, with floods of tears,
 "Ah, that's the thing which I would be!"
 Not childhood, full of frown and fret;
 Not youth, impatient to disown
 Those visions high, which to forget
 Were worse than never to have known;
 Not worldlings, in whose fair outside,
 Nor courtesy nor justice fails,
 Thanks to cross-pulling vices tied,
 Like Samson's foxes, by the tails;
 Not poets; real things are dreams,
 When dreams are as realities,
 And boasters of celestial gleams
 Go stumbling aye for want of eyes;
 Not patriots nor people's men,
 In whom two worse-matched evils meet
 Than ever sought Adullam's den,
 Base conscience and a high conceit;
 Not new-made saints, their feelings iced,
 Their joy in man and nature gone,
 Who sing "O easy yoke of Christ!"
 But find 'tis hard to get it on;
 Not great men, even when they're good;
 The good man whom the time makes great,
 By some disgrace of chance or blood,
 God fails not to humiliate;
 Not these: but souls, found here and there,
 Oases in our waste of sin,
 Where everything is well and fair,
 And Heaven remits its discipline;
 Whose sweet subdual of the world
 The worldling scarce can recognize,
 And ridicule, against it hurled,
 Drops with a broken sting, and dies;

Who nobly, if they cannot know
Whether a 'scutcheon's dubious field
Carries a falcon or a crow,
Fancy a falcon on the shield;
Yet, ever careful not to hurt
God's honor, who creates success,
Their praise of even the best desert
Is but to have presumed no less;
Who, should their own life plaudits bring,
Are simply vexed at heart that such
An easy, yea, delightful thing
Should move the minds of men so much.
They live by law, not like the fool,
But like the bard, who freely sings
In strictest bonds of rhyme and rule,
And finds in them, not bonds, but wings.
Postponing still their private ease
To courtly custom, appetite,
Subjected to observances,
To banquet goes with full delight;
Nay, continence and gratitude
So cleanse their lives from earth's alloy,
They taste, in Nature's common food,
Nothing but spiritual joy.
They shine like Moses in the face,
And teach our hearts, without the rod,
That God's grace is the only grace,
And all grace is the grace of God.

Coventry Palmore [1823-1896]

ODE TO DUTY

STERN Daughter of the Voice of God!
O Duty! if that name thou love,
Who art a light to guide, a rod
To check the erring and reprove;
Thou, who art victory and law
When empty terrors overawe;
From vain temptations dost set free;
And calm'st the weary strife of frail humanity!

2816 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

There are who ask not if thine eye
Be on them; who, in love and truth,
Where no misgiving is, rely
Upon the genial sense of youth:
Glad Hearts! without reproach or blot,
Who do thy work, and know it not:
O, if through confidence misplaced
They fail, thy saving arms, dread Power! around them cast.

Serene will be our days and bright,
And happy will our nature be,
When love is an unerring light,
And joy its own security.
And they a blissful course may hold
Even now, who, not unwisely bold,
Live in the spirit of this creed;
Yet seek thy firm support, according to their need.

I, loving freedom, and untried;
No sport of every random gust,
Yet being to myself a guide,
Too blindly have reposed my trust:
And oft, when in my heart was heard
Thy timely mandate, I deferred
The task, in smoother walks to stray;
But thee I now would serve more strictly, if I may.

Through no disturbance of my soul,
Or strong compunction in me wrought,
I supplicate for thy control;
But in the quietness of thought:
Me this unchartered freedom tires;
I feel the weight of chance-desires;
My hopes no more must change their name,
I long for a repose that ever is the same.

Stern Lawgiver! yet thou dost wear
The Godhead's most benignant grace;
Nor know we anything so fair
As is the smile upon thy face:

Flowers laugh before thee on their beds,
And fragrance in thy footing treads;
Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong;
And the most ancient heavens, through Thee, are fresh and strong.

To humbler functions, awful Power!
I call thee: I myself commend
Unto thy guidance from this hour;
O, let my weakness have an end!
Give unto me, made lowly wise,
The spirit of self-sacrifice;
The confidence of reason give;
And in the light of truth thy Bondman let me live!

William Wordsworth [1770-1850]

CHANT ROYAL OF HIGH VIRTUE

Who lives in suit of armor pent,
And hides himself behind a wall,
For him is not the great event,
The garland, nor the Capitol.
And is God's guerdon less than they?
Nay, moral man, I tell thee Nay:
Nor shall the flaming forts be won
By sneaking negatives alone,
By Lenten fast or Ramazàn,
But by the challenge proudly thrown—
Virtue is that beseems a Man!

God, in his Palace resident
Of Bliss, beheld our sinful ball,
And charged His own Son innocent
Us to redeem from Adam's fall.
—"Yet must it be that men Thee slay."
—"Yea, though it must, must I obey,"
Said Christ,—and came, His royal Son,
To die, and dying to atone
For harlot and for publican.
Read on that rood He died upon—
Virtue is that beseems a Man!

And by that rood where He was bent

I saw the world's great captains all
Go riding to the tournament—

Cyrus the Great and Hannibal,

Cæsar of Rome and Attila,

Lord Charlemagne and his array,

Lord Alisaundre of Macedon—

With flaming lance and habergeon

They passed, and to the rataplan

Of drums gave salutation—

Virtue is that beseems a Man!

Had tall Achilles lounged in tent

For aye, and Xanthus neighed in stall,

The towers of Troy had ne'er been shent,

Nor stayed the dance in Priam's hall.

Bend o'er thy book till thou be gray,

Read, mark, perpend, digest, survey—

Instruct thee deep as Solomon—

One only chapter thou shalt con,

One lesson learn, one sentence scan,

One title and one colophon—

Virtue is that beseems a Man!

High Virtue's hest is eloquent

With spur and not with martingall:

Sufficeth not thou'rt continent:

BE COURTEOUS, BRAVE, AND LIBERAL.

God fashioned thee of chosen clay

For service, nor did ever say

"Deny thee this," "Abstain from yon,"

Save to inure thee, thew and bone,

To be confirmèd of the clan

That made immortal Marathon—

Virtue is that beseems a Man!

ENVOY

Young Knight, the lists are set to-day:

Hereafter shall be long to pray

In sepulture with hands of stone.

Ride, then! outride the bugle blown!

And gaily dinging down the van
Charge with a cheer—Set on! Set on!

Virtue is that beseems a Man!

Arthur T. Quiller-Couch [1863-

THE SPLENDID SPUR

Nor on the neck of prince or hound,
Nor on a woman's finger twined,
May gold from the deriding ground
Keep sacred that we sacred bind:
Only the heel
Of splendid steel
Shall stand secure on sliding fate,
When golden navies weep their freight.

The scarlet hat, the laureled stave
Are measures, not the springs, of worth;
In a wife's lap, as in a grave,
Man's airy notions mix with earth.
Seek other spur
Bravely to stir
The dust in this loud world, and tread
Alp-high among the whispering dead.

Trust in thyself,—then spur amain:
So shall Charybdis wear a grace,
Grim Ætna laugh, the Libyan plain
Take roses to her shriveled face.
This orb—this round
Of sight and sound—
Count it the lists that God hath built
For haughty hearts to ride a-tilt.

Arthur T. Quiller-Couch [1863-

THE TRANSCENDENTALISTS

CONSCIENCE

From "A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers"

CONSCIENCE is instinct bred in the house,
Feeling and Thinking propagate the sin
By an unnatural breeding in and in.
I say, Turn it out of doors,
Into the moors.
I love a life whose plot is simple,
And does not thicken with every pimple,
A soul so sound no sickly conscience binds it,
That makes the universe no worse than 't finds it.
I love an earnest soul,
Whose mighty joy and sorrow
Are not drowned in a bowl,
And brought to life to-morrow;
That lives one tragedy,
And not seventy;
A conscience worth keeping,
Laughing not weeping;
A conscience wise and steady,
And forever ready;
Not changing with events,
Dealing in compliments;
A conscience exercised about
Large things, which one *may* doubt.
I love a soul not all of wood,
Predestined to be good,
But true to the backbone
Unto itself alone,
And false to none;
Born to its own affairs,
Its own joys and own cares;
By whom the work which God begun
Is finished, and not undone;

Taken up where he left off,
Whether to worship or to scoff;
If not good, why then evil,
If not good god, good devil.
Goodness!—you hypocrite, come out of that,
Live your life, do your work, then take your hat.
I have no patience towards
Such conscientious cowards.
Give me simple laboring folk,
Who love their work,
Whose virtue is a song
To cheer God along.

Henry David Thoreau [1817-1862]

MY PRAYER

GREAT God, I ask thee for no meaner pelf
Than that I may not disappoint myself;
That in my action I may soar as high
As I can now discern with this clear eye.

And next in value, which thy kindness lends,
That I may greatly disappoint my friends,
Howe'er they think or hope that it may be,
They may not dream how thou'st distinguished me.

That my weak hand may equal my firm faith,
And my life practise more than my tongue saith;
That my low conduct may not show,
Nor my relenting lines,
That I thy purpose did not know,
Or overrated thy designs.

Henry David Thoreau [1817-1862]

INSPIRATION

If with light head erect I sing,
Though all the Muses lend their force,
From my poor love of anything,
The verse is weak and shallow as its source.

2822 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

But if with bended neck I grope
Listening behind me for my wit,
With faith superior to hope,
More anxious to keep back than forward it,—

Making my soul accomplice there
Unto the flame my heart hath lit,
Then will the verse forever wear,—
Time cannot bend the line which God has writ.

I hearing get, who had but ears,
And sight, who had but eyes before;
I moments live, who lived but years,
And truth discern, who knew but learning's lore.

Now chiefly is my natal hour,
And only now my prime of life;
Of manhood's strength it is the flower,
'Tis peace's end, and war's beginning strife.

It comes in summer's broadest noon,
By a gray wall, or some chance place,
Unseasoning time, insulting June,
And vexing day with its presuming face.

I will not doubt the love untold
Which not my worth nor want hath bought,
Which wooed me young, and woos me old,
And to this evening hath me brought.

Henry David Thoreau [1817-1862]

EACH AND ALL

LITTLE thinks, in the field, yon red-cloaked clown
Of thee from the hill-top looking down;
The heifer that lows in the upland farm,
Far-heard, lows not thine ear to charm;
The sexton, tolling his bell at noon,
Deems not that great Napoleon
Stops his horse, and lists with delight,
Whilst his files sweep round yon Alpine height;

Nor knowest thou what argument
Thy life to thy neighbor's creed has lent.
All are needed by each one;
Nothing is fair or good alone.
I thought the sparrow's note from heaven,
Singing at dawn on the alder bough;
I brought him home, in his nest, at even;
He sings the song, but it cheers not now,
For I did not bring home the river and sky;—
He sang to my ear,—they sang to my eye.

The delicate shells lay on the shore;
The bubbles of the latest wave
Fresh pearls to their enamel gave,
And the bellowing of the savage sea
Greeted their safe escape to me.
I wiped away the weeds and foam,
I fetched my sea-born treasures home;
But the poor, unsightly, noisome things
Had left their beauty on the shore,
With the sun and the sand and the wild uproar.

The lover watched his graceful maid,
As 'mid the virgin train she strayed;
Nor knew her beauty's best attire
Was woven still by the snow-white choir.
At last she came to his hermitage,
Like the bird from the woodlands to the cage;—
The gay enchantment was undone,
A gentle wife, but fairy none.

Then I said, "I covet truth;
Beauty is unripe childhood's cheat;
I leave it behind with the games of youth:"—
As I spoke, beneath my feet
The ground-pine curled its pretty wreath,
Running over the club-moss burrs;
I inhaled the violet's breath;
Around me stood the oaks and firs;
Pine-cones and acorns lay on the ground;

Over me soared the eternal sky,
 Full of light and of deity;
 Again I saw, again I heard,
 The rolling river, the morning bird;—
 Beauty through my senses stole;
 I yielded myself to the perfect whole.

Ralph Waldo Emerson [1803-1882]

BRAHMA

IF the red slayer think he slays,
 Or if the slain think he is slain,
 They know not well the subtle ways
 I keep, and pass, and turn again.

Far or forgot to me is near;
 Shadow and sunlight are the same;
 The vanished gods to me appear;
 And one to me are shame and fame.

They reckon ill who leave me out;
 When me they fly, I am the wings;
 I am the doubter and the doubt,
 And I the hymn the Brahmin sings.

The strong gods pine for my abode,
 And pine in vain the sacred Seven;
 But thou, meek lover of the good!
 Find me, and turn thy back on heaven.

Ralph Waldo Emerson [1803-1882]

BACCHUS

BRING me wine, but wine which never grew
 In the belly of the grape,
 Or grew on vine whose tap-roots, reaching through
 Under the Andes to the Cape,
 Suffered no savor of the earth to 'scape.

Let its grapes the morn salute
From a nocturnal root,
Which feels the acrid juice
Of Styx and Erebus;
And turns the woe of Night,
By its own craft, to a more rich delight.

We buy ashes for bread;
We buy diluted wine;
Give me of the true,—
Whose ample leaves and tendrils curled
Among the silver hills of heaven
Draw everlasting dew;
Wine of wine,
Blood of the world,
Form of forms, and mold of statures,
That I intoxicated,
And by the draught assimilated,
May float at pleasure through all natures;
The bird-language rightly spell,
And that which roses say so well.

Wine that is shed
Like the torrents of the sun
Up the horizon walls,
Or like the Atlantic streams, which run
When the South Sea calls.

Water and bread,
Food which needs no transmuting,
Rainbow-flowering, wisdom-fruited,
Wine which is already man,
Food which teach and reason can.

Wine which Music is,—
Music and wine are one,—
That I, drinking this,
Shall hear far Chaos talk with me;
Kings unborn shall walk with me,

And the poor grass shall plot and plan
 What it will do when it is man.
 Quickened so, will I unlock
 Every crypt of every rock.

I thank the joyful juice
 For all I know;—
 Winds of remembering
 Of the ancient being blow,
 And seeming-solid walls of use
 Open and flow.

Pour, Bacchus! the remembering wine;
 Retrieve the loss of me and mine!
 Vine for vine be antidote,
 And the grape requite the lote!
 Haste to cure the old despair;—
 Reason in Nature's lotus drenched,
 The memory of ages quenched;
 Give them again to shine;
 Let wine repair what this undid;
 And where the infection slid,
 A dazzling memory revive;
 Refresh the faded tints,
 Recut the aged prints,
 And write my old adventures with the pen
 Which on the first day drew,
 Upon the tablets blue,
 The dancing Pleiads and eternal men.

Ralph Waldo Emerson [1803-1882]

THE PROBLEM

I LIKE a church; I like a cowl;
 I love a prophet of the soul;
 And on my heart monastic aisles
 Fall like sweet strains, or pensive smiles:
 Yet not for all his faith can see
 Would I that cowlèd churchman be.

Why should the vest on him allure,
Which I could not on me endure?

Not from a vain or shallow thought
His awful Jove young Phidias brought;
Never from lips of cunning fell
The thrilling Delphic oracle;
Out from the heart of nature rolled
The burdens of the Bible old;
The litanies of nations came,
Like the volcano's tongue of flame,
Up from the burning core below,—
The canticles of love and woe:
The hand that rounded Peter's dome,
And groined the aisles of Christian Rome,
Wrought in a sad sincerity;
Himself from God he could not free;
He builded better than he knew;—
The conscious stone to beauty grew.

Know'st thou what wove yon woodbird's nest
Of leaves, and feathers from her breast?
Or how the fish outbuilt her shell,
Painting with morn each annual cell?
Or how the sacred pine-tree adds
To her old leaves new myriads?
Such and so grew these holy piles,
Whilst love and terror laid the tiles.
Earth proudly wears the Parthenon,
As the best gem upon her zone,
And Morning opes with haste her lids,
To gaze upon the Pyramids;
O'er England's abbeys bends the sky,
As on its friends, with kindred eye;
For, out of Thought's interior sphere,
These wonders rose to upper air;
And Nature gladly gave them place,
Adopted them into her race,
And granted them an equal date
With Andes and with Ararat.

These temples grew as grows the grass;
 Art might obey, but not surpass.
 The passive Master lent his hand
 To the vast soul that o'er him planned;
 And the same power that reared the shrine
 Bestrode the tribes that knelt within.
 Ever the fiery Pentecost
 Girds with one flame the countless host,
 Trances the heart through chanting choirs,
 And through the priest the mind inspires.
 The word unto the prophet spoken
 Was writ on tables yet unbroken;
 The word by seers or sibyls told,
 In groves of oak, or fanes of gold,
 Still floats upon the morning wind,
 Still whispers to the willing mind.
 One accent of the Holy Ghost
 The heedless world hath never lost.
 I know what say the fathers wise,—
 The Book itself before me lies,—
 Old *Chrysostom*, best *Augustine*,
 And he who blent both in his line,
 The younger *Golden Lips* or mines,
 Taylor, the Shakespeare of divines.
 His words are music in my ear,
 I see his cowlèd portrait dear;
 And yet, for all his faith could see,
 I would not the good bishop be.

Ralph Waldo Emerson [1803-1882]

EVENING HYMN

SLOWLY by God's hand unfurled,
 Down around the weary world
 Falls the darkness; oh, how still
 Is the working of Thy will!

Mighty Maker! Here am I,—
 Work in me as silently,

Veil the day's distracting sights,
Show me heaven's eternal lights.

From the darkened sky come forth
Countless stars, a wondrous birth!
So may gleams of glory dart
Through the dim abyss, my heart;

Living worlds to view be brought,
In the boundless realms of thought,
High and infinite desires,
Burning like those upper fires.

Holy truth, eternal right,
Let them break upon my sight,
Let them shine unclouded, still,
And with light my being fill.

Thou art there. Oh, let me know,
Thou art here within me too;
Be the perfect peace of God
Here as there now shed abroad.

May my soul attuned be
To that perfect harmony,
Which, beyond the power of sound,
Fills the universe around.

William Henry Furness [1802-1896]

THE HIGHER GOOD

FATHER, I will not ask for wealth or fame,
Though once they would have joyed my carnal sense:
I shudder not to bear a hated name,
Wanting all wealth, myself my sole defense.
But give me, Lord, eyes to behold the truth;
A seeing sense that knows the eternal right;
A heart with pity filled, and gentlest ruth;
A manly faith that makes all darkness light:

Give me the power to labor for mankind;
 Make me the mouth of such as cannot speak;
 Eyes let me be to groping men and blind;
 A conscience to the base; and to the weak
 Let me be hands and feet; and to the foolish, mind;
 And lead still further on such as thy kingdom seek.

Theodore Parker [1810-1860]

THE IDLER

I IDLE stand that I may find employ,
 Such as my Master when He comes will give;
 I cannot find in mine own work my joy,
 But wait, although in waiting I must live;
 My body shall not turn which way it will,
 But stand till I the appointed road can find,
 And journeying so his messages fulfil,
 And do at every step the work designed.
 Enough for me, still day by day to wait
 Till Thou who form'st me find'st me too a task,
 A cripple lying at the rich man's gate,
 Content for the few crumbs I get to ask,
 A laborer but in heart, while bound my hands
 Hang idly down still waiting thy commands.

Jones Very [1813-1880]

QUESTIONINGS

HATH this world, without me wrought,
 Other substance than my thought?
 Lives it by my sense alone,
 Or by essence of its own?
 Will its life, with mine begun,
 Cease to be when that is done,
 Or another consciousness
 With the self-same forms impress?

Doth yon fire-ball, poised in air,
 Hang by my permission there?

Are the clouds that wander by
But the offspring of mine eye,
Born with every glance I cast,
Perishing when that is past?
And those thousand, thousand eyes,
Scattered through the twinkling skies,
Do they draw their life from mine,
Or of their own beauty shine?

Now I close my eyes, my ears,
And creation disappears;
Yet if I but speak the word,
All creation is restored.
Or, more wonderful, within
New creations do begin;
Hues more bright and forms more rare
Than reality doth wear
Flash across my inward sense,
Born of the mind's omnipotence.

Soul! that all informest, say!
Shall these glories pass away?
Will those planets cease to blaze
When these eyes no longer gaze?
And the life of things be o'er
When these pulses beat no more?

Thought! that in me works and lives,—
Life to all things living gives,—
Art thou not thyself, perchance,
But the universe in trance?
A reflection inly flung
By that world thou fanciedst sprung
From thyself—thyself a dream—
Of the world's thinking thou the theme?

Be it thus, or be thy birth
From a source above the earth—
Be thou matter, be thou mind,
In thee alone myself I find,

2832 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

And through thee alone, for me,
Hath this world reality.
Therefore, in thee will I live,
To thee all myself will give,
Losing still, that I may find
This bounded self in boundless Mind.

Frederic Henry Hedge [1805-1890]

THE GREAT VOICES

A VOICE from the sea to the mountains,
From the mountains again to the sea;
A call from the deep to the fountains:
O spirit! be glad and be free!

A cry from the floods to the fountains,
And the torrents repeat the glad song
As they leap from the breast of the mountains:
O spirit! be free and be strong!

The pine forests thrill with emotion
Of praise as the spirit sweeps by;
With a voice like the murmur of ocean
To the soul of the listener they cry.

Oh, sing, human heart, like the fountains,
With joy reverential and free;
Contented and calm as the mountains,
And deep as the woods and the sea.

Charles Timothy Brooks [1813-1883]

BEAUTY AND DUTY

I SLEPT, and dreamed that life was beauty;
I woke, and found that life was duty.
Was thy dream then a shadowy lie?
Toil on, sad heart, courageously,
And thou shalt find thy dream to be
A noonday light and truth to thee.

Ellen Hooper [18 -

THE STRAIGHT ROAD

BEAUTY may be the path to highest good,
And some successfully have it pursued.
Thou, who wouldst follow, be well warned to see
That way prove not a curvèd road to thee.
The straightest path perhaps which may be sought,
Lies through the great highway men call "I ought."

Ellen Hooper [18 -

THE WAY

THEY find the way who linger where
The soul finds fullest life;
The battle brave is carried on
By all who wait, and waiting, dare
Deem each day's least that's fitly done
A victory worthy to be won,
Nor seek their gain with strife.

Sidney Henry Morse [18 -

INSPIRATION

LIFE of Ages, richly poured,
Love of God, unspent and free,
Flowing in the Prophet's word
And the People's liberty!

Never was to chosen race
That unstinted tide confined;
Thine is every time and place,
Fountain sweet of heart and mind!

Secret of the morning stars,
Motion of the oldest hours,
Pledge through elemental wars
Of the coming spirit's powers!

2834 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

Rolling planet, flaming sun,
Stand in nobler man complete;
Prescient laws Thine errands run,
Frame the shrine for Godhead meet.

Homeward led, the wondering eye
Upward yearned in joy or awe,
Found the love that waited nigh,
Guidance of Thy guardian Law.

In the touch of earth it thrilled;
Down from mystic skies it burned;
Right obeyed and passion stilled
Its eternal gladness earned.

Breathing in the thinker's creed,
Pulsing in the hero's blood,
Nerving simplest thought and deed,
Freshening time with truth and good,

Consecrating art and song,
Holy book and pilgrim track,
Hurling floods of tyrant wrong
From the sacred limits back,—

Life of Ages, richly poured,
Love of God, unspent and free,
Flow still in the Prophet's word
And the People's liberty!

Samuel Johnson [1822-1882]

I IN THEE, AND THOU IN ME

I AM but clay in thy hands; but thou art the all-loving artist;
Passive I lie in thy sight, yet in my selfhood I strive
So to embody the life and love thou ever impartest
That in my spheres of the finite I may be truly alive.

Knowing thou needest this form, as I thy divine inspiration,
Knowing thou shapest the clay with a vision and purpose
divine,
So would I answer each touch of thy hand in its loving creation,
That in my conscious life thy power and beauty may shine.

Reflecting the noble intent thou hast in forming thy creatures;
Waking from sense into life of the soul, and the image of thee;
Working with thee in thy work to model humanity's features
Into the likeness of God, myself from myself I would free.

One with all human existence, no one above or below me;
Lit by thy wisdom and love, as roses are steeped in the morn;
Growing from clay to statue, from statue to flesh, till thou know me
Wrought into manhood celestial, and in thine image re-born.

So in thy love will I trust, bringing me sooner or later
Past the dark screen that divides these shows of the finite from thee.
Thine, thine only, this warm dear life, O loving Creator!
Thine the invisible future, born of the present, must be.

Christopher Pearse Cranch [1813-1892]

GNOSIS

THOUGHT is deeper than all speech,
Feeling deeper than all thought;
Souls to souls can never teach
What unto themselves was taught

We are spirits clad in veils;
Man by man was never seen;
All our deep communing fails
To remove the shadowy screen.

Heart to heart was never known;
Mind with mind did never meet;
We are columns left alone
Of a temple once complete.

2836 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

Like the stars that gem the sky,
Far apart, though seeming near,
In our light we scattered lie;
All is thus but starlight here.

What is social company
But a babbling summer stream?
What our wise philosophy
But the glancing of a dream?

Only when the sun of love
Melts the scattered stars of thought,
Only when we live above
What the dim-eyed world hath taught,

Only when our souls are fed
By the fount which gave them birth,
And by inspiration led
Which they never drew from earth,

We, like parted drops of rain,
Swelling till they meet and run,
Shall be all absorbed again,
Melting, flowing into one.

Christopher Pearse Cranch [1813-1892]

THE FUTURE

WHAT may we take into the vast Forever?
That marble door
Admits no fruit of all our long endeavor,
No fame-wreathed crown we wore,
No garnered lore.

What can we bear beyond the unknown portal?
No gold, no gains
Of all our toiling: in the life immortal
No hoarded wealth remains,
Nor gilds, nor stains.

Naked from out that far abyss behind us
 We entered here:
No word came with our coming, to remind us
 What wondrous world was near,
 No hope, no fear.

Into the silent, starless Night before us,
 Naked we glide:
No hand has mapped the constellations o'er us,
 No comrade at our side,
 No chart, no guide.

Yet fearless toward that midnight, black and hollow,
 Our footsteps fare;
The beckoning of a Father's hand we follow—
 His love alone is there,
 No curse, no care.

Edward Rowland Sill [1841-1887]

A MIND CONTENT

"JOG ON, JOG ON"

From "The Winter's Tale"

JOG on, jog on the foot-path way,
And merrily hent the stile-a;
A merry heart goes all the day,
Your sad tires in a mile-a.

William Shakespeare [1564-1616]

ON A CONTENTED MIND

WHEN all is done and said,
In the end this shall you find:
He most of all doth bathe in bliss
That hath a quiet mind;
And, clear from worldly cares,
To deem can be content
The sweetest time in all his life
In thinking to be spent.

The body subject is
To fickle Fortune's power,
And to a million of mishaps
Is casual every hour;
And Death in time doth change
It to a clod of clay;
When as the mind, which is divine,
Runs never to decay.

Companion none is like
Unto the mind alone,
For many have been harmed by speech,—
Through thinking, few, or none.

The Means to Attain Happy Life 2839

Fear oftentimes restraineth words,
But makes not thoughts to cease;
And he speaks best that hath the skill
When for to hold his peace.

Our wealth leaves us at death,
Our kinsmen at the grave;
But virtues of the mind unto
The heavens with us we have;
Wherefore, for virtue's sake,
I can be well content
The sweetest time of all my life
To deem in thinking spent.

Thomas Vaux [1510-1556]

MÆSIA'S SONG

From "Farewell to Folly"

SWEET are the thoughts that savor of content,
The quiet mind is richer than a crown,
Sweet are the nights in careless slumber spent,
The poor estate scorns Fortune's angry frown:
Such sweet content, such minds, such sleep, such bliss,
Beggars enjoy, when princes oft do miss.

The homely house that harbors quiet rest,
The cottage that affords no pride nor care,
The mean that 'grees with country music best,
The sweet consort of mirth and modest fare,
Obscurèd life sets down a type of bliss:
A mind content both crown and kingdom is.

Robert Greene [1560?-1592]

THE MEANS TO ATTAIN HAPPY LIFE

MARTIAL, the things that do attain
The happy life be these, I find:
The riches left, not got with pain;
The fruitful ground; the quiet mind;

The equal friend; no grudge, no strife;
 No charge of rule, no governance;
 Without disease, the healthful life;
 The household of continuance;
 The mean diet, no delicate fare;
 True wisdom joined with simpleness;
 The night discharged of all care,
 Where wine the wit may not oppress;
 The faithful wife, without debate;
 Such sleeps as may beguile the night:
 Contented with thine own estate,
 Nor wish for death, nor fear his might.

After Martial, by Henry Howard [1517?-1547]

RISPOSTA

THERE is a jewel which no Indian mines
 Can buy, no chemic art can counterfeit;
 It makes men rich in greatest poverty;
 Makes water wine, turns wooden cups to gold,
 The homely whistle to sweet music's strain:
 Seldom it comes, to few from heaven sent,
 That much in little, all in naught—Content.

Unknown

A CONTENTED MIND

I WEIGH not fortune's frown or smile;
 I joy not much in earthly joys;
 I seek not state, I reck not style;
 I am not fond of fancy's toys:
 I rest so pleased with what I have,
 I wish no more, no more I crave.

I quake not at the thunder's crack;
 I tremble not at news of war;
 I swound not at the news of wrack;
 I shrink not at a blazing star;
 I fear not loss, I hope not gain,
 I envy none, I none disdain.

I see ambition never pleased;
 I see some Tantals starved in store;
 I see gold's dropsy seldom eased;
 I see even Midas gape for more;
 I neither want nor yet abound,—
 Enough's a feast, content is crowned.

I feign not friendship where I hate;
 I fawn not on the great (in show);
 I prize, I praise a mean estate,—
 Neither too lofty nor too low:
 This, this is all my choice, my cheer,—
 A mind content, a conscience clear.

Joshua Sylvester [1563-1618]

THE HAPPY HEART

From "Patient Grissell"

ART thou poor, yet hast thou golden slumbers?

O sweet content!

Art thou rich, yet is thy mind perplexèd?

O punishment!

Dost thou laugh to see how fools are vexèd

To add to golden numbers, golden numbers?

O sweet content! O sweet, O sweet content!

Work apace, apace, apace, apace;

Honest labor bears a lovely face;

Then hey nonny nonny, hey nonny nonny!

Canst drink the waters of the crispèd spring?

O sweet content!

Swimm'st thou in wealth, yet sink'st in thine own tears?

O punishment!

Then he that patiently want's burden bears

No burden bears, but is a king, a king!

O sweet content! O sweet, O sweet content!

Work apace, apace, apace, apace;

Honest labor bears a lovely face;

Then hey nonny nonny, hey nonny nonny!

Thomas Dekker [1570?-1641?]

THE MILLER OF THE DEE

THERE dwelt a miller, hale and bold,
 Beside the River Dee;
 He wrought and sang from morn till night,
 No lark more blithe than he;
 And this the burden of his song
 Forever used to be,
 "I envy no man, no, not I,
 And no one envies me!"

"Thou'rt wrong, my friend!" said old King Hal,
 "As wrong as wrong can be;
 For could my heart be light as thine,
 I'd gladly change with thee.
 And tell me now what makes thee sing
 With voice so loud and free,
 While I am sad, though I'm the King,
 Beside the River Dee?"

The miller smiled and doffed his cap:
 "I earn my bread," quoth he;
 "I love my wife, I love my friend,
 I love my children three.
 I owe no one I cannot pay,
 I thank the River Dee,
 That turns the mill that grinds the corn
 To feed my babes and me!"

"Good friend," said Hal, and sighed the while,
 "Farewell! and happy be;
 But say no more, if thou'dst be true,
 That no one envies thee.
 Thy mealy cap is worth my crown;
 Thy mill my kingdom's fee!
 Such men as thou are England's boast,
 Oh, miller of the Dee!"

Charles Mackay [1814-1889]

CORONATION

At the king's gate the subtle noon
Wove filmy yellow nets of sun;
Into the drowsy snare too soon
The guards fell one by one.

Through the king's gate, unquestioned then,
A beggar went, and laughed, "This brings
Me chance, at last, to see if men
Fare better, being kings."

The king sat bowed beneath his crown,
Propping his face with listless hand;
Watching the hour-glass sifting down
Too slow its shining sand.

"Poor man, what wouldst thou have of me?"
The beggar turned, and pitying,
Replied, like one in dream, "Of thee,
Nothing. I want the king."

Uprose the king, and from his head
Shook off the crown, and threw it by.
"O man, thou must have known," he said,
"A greater king than I."

Through all the gates, unquestioned then,
Went king and beggar hand in hand.
Whispered the king, "Shall I know when
Before *his* throne I stand?"

The beggar laughed. Free winds in haste
Were wiping from the king's hot brow
The crimson lines the crown had traced.
"This is his presence now."

At the king's gate, the crafty noon
Unwove its yellow nets of sun;
Out of their sleep in terror soon
The guards waked one by one.

2844 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

"Ho here! Ho there! Has no man seen
The king?" The cry ran to and fro;
Beggar and king, they laughed, I ween,
The laugh that free men know.

- On the king's gate the moss grew gray;
The king came not. They called him dead;
And made his eldest son one day
Slave in his father's stead.
Helen Hunt Jackson [1831-1885]

THE CHARACTER OF A HAPPY LIFE

How happy is he born and taught
That serveth not another's will;
Whose armor is his honest thought,
And simple truth his utmost skill!

Whose passions not his masters are;
Whose soul is still prepared for death,
Not tied unto the world by care
Of public fame or private breath;

Who envies none that chance doth raise,
Nor vice; who never understood
How deepest wounds are given by praise;
Nor rules of state, but rules of good;

Who hath his life from rumors freed;
Whose conscience is his strong retreat;
Whose state can neither flatterers feed,
Nor ruin make oppressors great;

Who God doth late and early pray
More of His grace than gifts to lend;
And entertains the harmless day
With a well-chosen book or friend;

—This man is freed from servile bands
Of hope to rise, or fear to fall:
Lord of himself, though not of lands,
And having nothing, yet hath all.

Henry Wotton [1568-1639]

“MY MIND TO ME A KINGDOM IS”

My mind to me a kingdom is,
Such present joys therein I find,
That it excels all other bliss
That earth affords or grows by kind:
Though much I want which most would have,
Yet still my mind forbids to crave.

No princely pomp, no wealthy store,
No force to win the victory,
No wily wit to salve a sore,
No shape to feed a loving eye;
To none of these I yield as thrall:
For why? My mind doth serve for all.

I see how plenty [surfeits] oft,
And hasty climbers soon do fall;
I see that those which are aloft
Mishap doth threaten most of all;
They get with toil, they keep with fear:
Such cares my mind could never bear.

Content to live, this is my stay;
I seek no more than may suffice;
I press to bear no haughty sway;
Look, what I lack my mind supplies:
Lo, thus I triumph like a king,
Content with that my mind doth bring.

Some have too much, yet still do crave;
I little have, and seek no more.
They are but poor, though much they have,
And I am rich with little store:
They poor, I rich; they beg, I give;
They lack, I leave; they pine, I live.

I laugh not at another's loss;
I grudge not at another's gain;
No worldly waves my mind can toss;
My state at one doth still remain:

2846 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

I fear no foe, I fawn no friend;
I loathe not life, nor dread my end.

Some weigh their pleasure by their lust,
Their wisdom by their rage of will;
Their treasure is their only trust;
A cloakèd craft their store of skill:
But all the pleasure that I find
Is to maintain a quiet mind.

My wealth is health and perfect ease;
My conscience clear my chief defense;
I neither seek by bribes to please,
Nor by deceit to breed offense:
Thus do I live; thus will I die;
Would all did so as well as I!

Edward Dyer [1550?-1607]

WRITTEN AT AN INN AT HENLEY

To thee, fair freedom! I retire
From flattery, cards, and dice, and din;
Nor art thou found in mansions higher
Than the low cot, or humble inn.

'Tis here with boundless power I reign;
And every health which I begin,
Converts dull port to bright champagne;
Such freedom crowns it, at an inn.

I fly from pomp, I fly from plate!
I fly from falsehood's specious grin!
Freedom I love, and form I hate,
And choose my lodgings at an inn.

Here, waiter! take my sordid ore,
Which lackeys else might hope to win;
It buys, what courts have not in store;
It buys me freedom at an inn.

Whoe'er has traveled life's dull round,
Where'er his stages may have been,
May sigh to think he still has found
The warmest welcome, at an inn.
William Shenstone [1714-1763]

CARELESS CONTENT

I **AM** content, I do not care,
Wag as it will the world for me!
When fuss and fret was all my fare
It got no ground that I could see;
So when away my caring went
I counted cost and was content.

With more of thanks and less of thought
I strive to make my matters meet;
To seek what ancient sages sought,
Physic and food in sour and sweet;
To take what passes in good part
And keep the hiccups from the heart.

With good and gently-humored hearts
I choose to chat where'er I come,
Whate'er the subject be that starts;
But if I get among the glum
I hold my tongue to tell the troth,
And keep my breath to cool my broth.

For chance or change of peace or pain,
For Fortune's favor or her frown,
For lack or glut, for loss or gain,
I never dodge nor up nor down,
But swing what way the ship shall swim,
Or tack about with equal trim.

I suit not where I shall not speed,
Nor trace the turn of every tide.
If simple sense will not succeed
I made no bustling, but abide.

For shining wealth or scaring woe
I force no friend, I fear no foe.

Of ups and downs, of ins and outs,
Of they're-i'-th'-wrong and we're-i'-th'-right,
I shun the rancors and the routs;
And, wishing well to every wight,
Whatever turn the matter takes,
I deem it all but ducks and drakes.

With whom I feast I do not fawn,
Nor if the folks should flout me, faint.
If wanted welcome be withdrawn
I cook no kind of a complaint.
With none disposed to disagree,
I like them best who best like me.

Not that I rate myself the rule
How all my betters should behave;
But fame shall find me no man's fool,
Nor to a set of men a slave;
I love a friendship free and frank,
But hate to hang upon a hank.

Fond of a true and trusty tie,
I never loose where'er I link,
Though if a business budges by
I talk thereon just as I think;
My word, my work, my heart, my hand,
Still on a side together stand.

If names or notions make a noise,
Whatever hap the question hath
The point impartially I poise,
And read and write, but without wrath;
For, should I burn or break my brains,
Pray, who will pay me for my pains?

I love my neighbor as myself—
Myself like him too, by his leave!
Nor to his pleasure, power or pelf
Came I to crouch, as I conceive!

Dame Nature doubtless has designed
A man the monarch of his mind.

Now taste and try this temper, sirs,
Mood it and brood it in your breast;
Or, if ye ween for worldly stirs
That man does right to mar his rest,
Let me be deft and debonair,
I am content, I do not care!
John Byrom [1692-1763]

THE GOLDEN MEAN *

RECEIVE, dear friend, the truths I teach,
So shalt thou live beyond the reach
Of adverse Fortune's power;
Not always tempt the distant deep,
Nor always timorously creep
Along the treacherous shore.

He that holds fast the golden mean,
And lives contentedly between
The little and the great,
Feels not the wants that pinch the poor,
Nor plagues that haunt the rich man's door,
Imbittering all his state.

The tallest pines feel most the power
Of wintry blasts; the loftiest tower
Comes heaviest to the ground;
The bolts, that spare the mountain's side,
His cloud-capped eminence divide,
And spread the ruin round.

The well-informed philosopher
Rejoices with a wholesome fear,

* For the original of this poem see page 3579.

2850 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

And hopes, in spite of pain;
If Winter bellow from the north,
Soon the sweet Spring comes dancing forth,
And Nature laughs again.

What if thine heaven be overcast?
The dark appearance will not last;
Expect a brighter sky.
The God, that strings the silver bow,
Awakes sometimes the Muses too,
And lays his arrows by.

If hindrances obstruct thy way,
Thy magnanimity display,
And let thy strength be seen;
But O! if Fortune fill thy sail
With more than a propitious gale,
Take half thy canvas in.

After Horace, by William Cowper [1731-1800]

“ITS AIN DRAP O’ DEW”

CONFIDE ye aye in Providence,
For Providence is kind:
An’ bear ye a’ life’s changes
Wi’ a calm an’ tranquil mind.
Though pressed and hemmed on every side,
Ha’e faith, an’ ye’ll win through;
For ilka blade o’ grass
Keeps its ain drap o’ dew.

Gin reft frae friends, or crossed in love,
As whiles nae doubt ye’ve been,
Grief lies deep-hidden in your heart,
Or tears flow frae your e’en,
Believe it for the best, and trow
There’s good in store for you;
For ilka blade o’ grass
Keeps its ain drap o’ dew.

In lang, lang days o' simmer,
 When the clear and cloudless sky
 Refuses ae wee drap o' rain
 To nature, parched and dry,
 The genial night, with balmy breath,
 Gars verdure spring anew,
 An' ilka blade o' grass
 Keeps its ain drap o' dew.

Sae lest 'mid fortune's sunshine
 We should feel owre proud an' hie,
 An' in our pride forget to wipe
 The tear frae poortith's e'e,
 Some wee dark clouds o' sorrow come,
 We ken na whence nor hoo;
 But ilka blade o' grass
 Keeps its ain drap o' dew.

James Ballantine [1808-1877]

RESIGNATION

WHY, why repine, my pensive friend,
 At pleasures slipped away?
 Some the stern Fates will never lend,
 And all refuse to stay.

I see the rainbow in the sky,
 The dew upon the grass;
 I see them, and I ask not why
 They glimmer or they pass.

With folded arms I linger not
 To call them back; 'twere vain:
 In this, or in some other spot,
 I know they'll shine again.

Walter Savage Landor [1775-1864]

“ EN VOYAGE ”

WHICHEVER way the wind doth blow,
 Some heart is glad to have it so;
 Then blow it east or blow it west,
 The wind that blows, that wind is best.

My little craft sails not alone:
 A thousand fleets from every zone
 Are out upon a thousand seas;
 And what for me were favoring breeze
 Might dash another, with the shock
 Of doom, upon some hidden rock.

And so I do not care to pray
 For winds to waft me on my way,
 But leave it to a Higher Will
 To stay or speed me; trusting still
 That all is well, and sure that He
 Who launched my bark will sail with me
 Through storm and calm, and will not fail,
 Whatever breezes may prevail,
 To land me, every peril past,
 Within his sheltering haven at last.

Then, whatsoever wind doth blow,
 My heart is glad to have it so;
 And blow it east or blow it west,
 The wind that blows, that wind is best.

Caroline Atwater Mason [1853-

THE HAPPIEST HEART

Who drives the horses of the sun
 Shall lord it but a day;
 Better the lowly deed were done,
 And kept the humble way.

The rust will find the sword of fame,
 The dust will hide the crown;
 Ay, none shall nail so high his name
 Time will not tear it down.

The happiest heart that ever beat
 Was in some quiet breast
 That found the common daylight sweet,
 And left to Heaven the rest.

John Vance Cheney [1848-

GOOD-BYE

GOOD-BYE, proud world! I'm going home:
 Thou art not my friend, and I'm not thine.
 Long through thy weary crowds I roam;
 A river-ark on the ocean brine,
 Long I've been tossed like the driven foam;
 But now, proud world! I'm going home.

Good-bye to Flattery's fawning face;
 To Grandeur with his wise grimace;
 To upstart Wealth's averted eye;
 To supple Office, low and high;
 To crowded halls, to court and street;
 To frozen hearts and hasting feet;
 To those who go, and those who come;
 Good-bye, proud world! I'm going home.

I am going to my own hearth-stone,
 Bosomed in yon green hills alone,—
 A secret nook in a pleasant land,
 Whose groves the frolic fairies planned;
 Where arches green, the livelong day,
 Echo the blackbird's roundelay,
 And vulgar feet have never trod—
 A spot that is sacred to thought and God.

O, when I am safe in my sylvan home,
 I tread on the pride of Greece and Rome;
 And when I am stretched beneath the pines,
 Where the evening star so holy shines,
 I laugh at the lore and the pride of man,
 At the sophist schools, and the learned clan;
 For what are they all, in their high conceit,
 When man in the bush with God may meet?

Ralph Waldo Emerson [1803-1882]

SAPIENTIA LUNÆ

THE wisdom of the world said unto me:

*"Go forth and run, the race is to the brave;
 Perchance some honor tarrieth for thee!"*

"As tarrieth," I said, "for sure, the grave."

2854 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

For I had pondered on a rune of roses,
Which to her votaries the moon discloses.

The wisdom of the world said: "*There are bays:*

Go forth and run, for victory is good,

After the stress of the laborious days."

"Yet," said I, "shall I be the worms' sweet food,"

As I went musing on a rune of roses,

Which in her hour, the pale, soft moon discloses.

Then said my voices: "*Wherefore strive or run,*

On dusty highways ever, a vain race?

The long night cometh, starless, void of sun,

What light shall serve thee like her golden face?"

For I had pondered on a rune of roses,

And knew some secrets which the moon discloses.

"Yea," said I, "for her eyes are pure and sweet

As lilies, and the fragrance of her hair

Is many laurels; and it is not meet

To run for shadows when the prize is here";

And I went reading in that rune of roses

Which to her votaries the moon discloses.

Ernest Dowson [1867-1900]

FRIENDSHIP AND BROTHERHOOD

SALVE!

To live within a cave—it is most good;
But, if God make a day,
And some one come, and say,
“Lo! I have gathered fagots in the wood!”
E’en let him stay,
And light a fire, and fan a temporal mood!

So sit till morning! when the light is grown
That he the path can read,
Then bid the man God-speed!
His morning is not thine: yet must thou own
They have a cheerful warmth—those ashes on the stone.
Thomas Edward Brown [1830-1897]

ABOU BEN ADHEM

ABOU BEN ADHEM (may his tribe increase!)
Awoke one night from a deep dream of peace,
And saw, within the moonlight in his room,
Making it rich, and like a lily in bloom,
An angel writing in a book of gold:—
Exceeding peace had made Ben Adhem bold,
And to the Presence in the room he said,
“What writest thou?”—The vision raised its head,
And with a look made of all sweet accord,
Answered, “The names of those who love the Lord.”
“And is mine one?” said Abou. “Nay, not so,”
Replied the Angel. Abou spoke more low,
But cheerly still; and said, “I pray thee, then,
Write me as one that loves his fellow-men.”

2856 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

The angel wrote, and vanished. The next night
It came again with a great wakening light,
And showed the names whom love of God had blessed,
And lo! Ben Adhem's name led all the rest.

Leigh Hunt [1784-1859]

ENVOY

From "More Songs from Vagabondia"

I

WHOSE furthest footstep never strayed
Beyond the village of his birth,
Is but a lodger for the night
In this old wayside inn of earth.

To-morrow he shall take his pack,
And set out for the ways beyond,
On the old trail from star to star,
An alien and a vagabond.

II

If any record of our names
Be blown about the hills of time,
Let no one sunder us in death,—
The man of paint, the men of rhyme.

Of all our good, of all our bad,
This one thing only is of worth,—
We held the league of heart to heart
The only purpose of the earth.

Richard Hovey [1864-1900]

FRIENDS

You ask me "why I like him." Nay,
I cannot; nay, I would not, say.
I think it vile to pigeonhole
The pros and cons of a kindred soul.

You "wonder he should be my friend."
 But then why should you comprehend?
 Thank God for this—a new—surprise:
 My eyes, remember, are not your eyes.

Cherish this one small mystery;
 And marvel not that love can be
 "In spite of all his many flaws."
 In spite? Supposing I said "Because."

A truce, a truce to questioning:
 "We two are friends" tells everything.
 Yet if you *must* know, this is why:
 Because he is he and I am I.

Edward Verrall Lucas [18 -

A FRIEND

ALL that he came to give,
 He gave and went again:
 I have seen one man live,
 I have seen one man reign,
 With all the graces in his train.

As one of us, he wrought
 Things of the common hour:
 Whence was the charmed soul brought,
 That gave each act such power;
 The natural beauty of a flower?

Magnificence and grace,
 Excellent courtesy:
 A brightness on the face,
 Airs of high memory:
 Whence came all these, to such as he?

Like young Shakespearean kings,
 He won the adoring throng:
 And as Apollo sings,
 He triumphed with a song:
 Triumphed, and sang, and passed along.

2858 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

With a light word, he took
The hearts of men in thrall:
And, with a golden look,
Welcomed them, at his call
Giving their love, their strength, their all.

No man less proud than he,
Nor cared for homage less:
Only, he could not be
Far off from happiness:
Nature was bound to his success.

Weary, the cares, the jars,
The lets, of every day:
But the heavens filled with stars,
Chanced he upon the way:
And where he stayed, all joy would stay.

Now when the night draws down,
When the austere stars burn;
Roaming the vast live town,
My thoughts and memories yearn
Toward him, who never will return.

Yet have I seen him live,
And owned my friend, a king:
All that he came to give,
He gave and I, who sing
His praise, bring all I have to bring.

Lionel Johnson [1867-1902]

BILL AND JOE

COME, dear old comrade, you and I
Will steal an hour from days gone by,
The shining days when life was new,
And all was bright with morning dew,
The lusty days of long ago,
When you were Bill and I was Joe:

Your name may flaunt a titled trail,
Proud as a cockerel's rainbow tail;
And mine as brief appendix wear
As Tam O'Shanter's luckless mare;
To-day, old friend, remember still
That I am Joe and you are Bill.

You've won the great world's envied prize,
And grand you look in people's eyes,
With H O N. and L L. D.
In big brave letters, fair to see,—
Your fist, old fellow! off they go!—
How are you, Bill? How are you, Joe?

You've worn the judge's ermined robe;
You've taught your name to half the globe;
You've sung mankind a deathless strain;
You've made the dead past live again:
The world may call you what it will,
But you and I are Joe and Bill.

The chaffing young folks stare and say,
"See those old buffers, bent and gray,—
They talk like fellows in their teens!
Mad, poor old boys! That's what it means,"—
And shake their heads; they little know
The throbbing hearts of Bill and Joe!—

How Bill forgets his hour of pride,
While Joe sits smiling at his side;
How Joe, in spite of time's disguise,
Finds the old schoolmate in his eyes,—
Those calm, stern eyes that melt and fill
As Joe looks fondly up at Bill.

Ah, pensive scholar, what is fame?
A fitful tongue of leaping flame;
A giddy whirlwind's fickle gust,
That lifts a pinch of mortal dust;
A few swift years, and who can show
Which dust was Bill and which was Joe?

The weary idol takes his stand,
 Holds out his bruised and aching hand,
 While gaping thousands come and go,—
 How vain it seems, this empty show!
 Till all at once his pulses thrill;—
 'Tis poor old Joe's "God bless you, Bill!"

And shall we breathe in happier spheres
 The names that pleased our mortal ears;
 In some sweet lull of harp and song,
 For earth-born spirits none too long,
 Just whispering of the world below
 Where this was Bill and that was Joe?

No matter; while our home is here
 No sounding name is half so dear;
 When fades at length our lingering day,
 Who cares what pompous tombstones say?
 Read on the hearts that love us still,
Hic jacet Joe. Hic jacet Bill.

Oliver Wendell Holmes [1809-1894]

"LONG, LONG AGO"

OLD friend of mine, you were dear to my heart,
 Long, long ago, long ago.
 Little did we think of a time we should part,
 Long, long ago, long ago.
 Hand clasped in hand through the world we would go.
 Down our old untrodden path the wild weeds grow!
 Great was the love 'twixt us; bitter was the smart:
 Old friend of mine long ago.

Patient watch I kept for you many, many a day,
 Long, long ago, long ago;
 Waited and wept for you far, far away,
 Long, long ago, long ago.
 Merry came each May-tide, green leaves would start:
 Never came my old friend back to my heart.
 Lonely I went on my weary, weary way,
 Old friend of mine long ago.

Oft as I muse at the shadowy nightfall
Over the dear Long Ago,
Borne on tears arises the dark, dark pall,
Fallen on my heart long ago.
Love is not dead, though we wander apart;
How I could clasp you, old friend, to my heart!
Barriers lie between us, but God knoweth all,
Old friend of mine long ago.

Gerald Massey [1828-1907]

COMRADES

WHERE are the friends that I knew in my Maying,
In the days of my youth, in the first of my roaming?
We were dear; we were leal; O, far we went straying;
Now never a heart to my heart comes homing!—
Where is he now, the dark boy slender
Who taught me bare-back, stirrup and reins?
I loved him; he loved me; my beautiful, tender
Tamer of horses on grass-grown plains.

Where is he now whose eyes swam brighter,
Softer than love, in his turbulent charms;
Who taught me to strike, and to fall, dear fighter,
And gathered me up in his boyhood arms;
Taught me the rifle, and with me went riding,
Suppled my limbs to the horseman's war;
Where is he now, for whom my heart's bidding,
Biding, bidding—but he rides far?

O love that passes the love of woman!
Who that hath felt it shall ever forget,
When the breath of life with a throb turns human,
And a lad's heart is to a lad's heart set?
Ever, forever, lover and rover—
They shall cling, nor each from other shall part
Till the reign of the stars in the heavens be over,
And life is dust in each faithful heart!—

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They are dead, the American grasses under;
There is no one now who presses my side;
By the African chotts I am riding asunder,
And with great joy ride I the last great ride.
I am fey; I am fain of sudden dying;
Thousands of miles there is no one near;
And my heart—all the night it is crying, crying
In the bosoms of dead lads darling-dear.

Hearts of my music—they dark earth covers;
Comrades to die, and to die for, were they;—
In the width of the world there were no such rovers—
Back to back, breast to breast, it was ours to stay;
And the highest on earth was the vow that we cherished,
To spur forth from the crowd and come back never more,
And to ride in the track of great souls perished
Till the nests of the lark shall roof us o'er.

Yet lingers a horseman on Altai highlands,
Who hath joy of me, riding the Tartar glissade;
And one, far faring o'er orient islands
Whose blood yet glints with my blade's accolade;
North, west, east, I fling you my last hallooing,
Last love to the breasts where my own has bled;
Through the reach of the desert my soul leaps pursuing
My star where it rises a Star of the Dead.

George Edward Woodberry [1855—

COMRADES

At least, it was a life of swords,
Our life! nor lived in vain:
We fought the fight with mighty lords,
Nor dastards have we slain.

We stirred at morn, and through bright air
Swept to the trysting place:
Winds of the mountains in our hair,
And sunrise on each face.

No need to spur! our horses knew
The joy, to which we went:
Over the brightening lands they flew
Forward, and were content.

On each man's lips, an happy smile;
In each man's eyes, delight:
So, fired with foretaste, mile on mile,
We thundered to the fight.

Let death come now, and from the sun
Hide me away: what then?
My days have seen more prowess done,
Than years of other men.

Oh, warriors of the rugged heights,
We, where the eagles nest:
They, courtly soldiers, gentle knights,
By kings and dames caressed.

Not theirs, the passion of the sword,
The fire of living blades!
Like men, they fought: and found reward
In dance and feast, like maids.

We, on the mountain lawns encamped,
Close under the great stars,
Turned, when the horses hard by stamped,
And dreamed again, of wars:

Or, if one woke, he saw the gleam
Of moonlight, on each face,
Touch its tumultuary dream
With moments of mild grace.

We hated no man; but we fought
With all men: the fierce wind
Lashes the wide earth without thought;
Our tempest scourged mankind.

2864 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

They cursed us, living without laws!
They, in their pride of peace:
Who bared no blade, but in just cause:
Nor grieved, that war should cease.

O spirit of the wild hill-side!
O spirit of the steel!
We answered nothing, when they cried,
But challenged with a peal.

And, when the battle blood had poured
To slake our souls' desire:
Oh, brave to hear, how torrents roared
Beside the pinewood fire!

My brothers, whom in warrior wise
The death of deaths hath stilled!
Ah, you would understand these eyes,
Although with strange tears filled!

Lionel Johnson [1867-1902]

COMRADES

I ROSE up when the battle was dead,
I, the most wounded man of us all!
From the slain that fell, to the living that fled,
Over the waste one name I call.

Thou whose strength was an oak that branched,
Thou whose voice was a fire that burned,
Thine the face that the fighting blanched,
Thine the heart that the tumult turned!

Had I, beloved, when swords swept measure,
Had I but reached thee, and slain thee then:
Then in thy death had my soul found pleasure,
Counting thee dead as a man with men.

Then with the peace, when the fight was ended,
Men would have asked, and I would have said,
"Yonder he lies whom once I befriended,
Sharing his rest in the ranks of the dead."

Ghosts of the riders, ghosts of the ridden,
 Here keep tryst for the loves that died;
 Thou alone of all loves art hidden,
 Never again to be near my side.

Here, beloved, when the fight has slackened,
 I rise up, and a sword is mine!
 Over the mounds with dead men blackened,
 Ever my soul makes haste for thine.

Though thou lurk in the caverns beneath,
 Though thou crouch by the moaning sea,
 I am a sword that leaps to its sheath,
 Never at rest till I find out thee!

Oh, poor soul, all the night unstanched,
 Poor heart, couched in a shameful breast,
 Thou, whose face at the fighting blanched,
 Out of the battle I bring thee—rest.

Laurence Housman [1867—

JAFFÂR

*Shelley, take this to thy dear memory;—
 To praise the generous, is to think of thee.*

JAFFÂR, the Barmecide, the good Vizier,
 The poor man's hope, the friend without a peer,
 Jaffâr was dead, slain by a doom unjust;
 And guilty Hâroun, sullen with mistrust
 Of what the good, and e'en the bad, might say,
 Ordained that no man living from that day
 Should dare to speak his name on pain of death.
 All Araby and Persia held their breath;
 All but the brave Mondeer: he, proud to show
 How far for love a grateful soul could go,
 And facing death for very scorn and grief
 (For his great heart wanted a great relief),
 Stood forth in Bagdad daily, in the square
 Where once had stood a happy house, and there
 Harangued the tremblers at the scimitar
 On all they owed to the divine Jaffâr.

2866 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

"Bring me this man," the caliph cried. The man
Was brought, was gazed upon. The mutes began
To bind his arms. "Welcome, brave cords," cried he;
"From bonds far worse Jaffâr delivered me;
From wants, from shames, from loveless household fears;
Made a man's eyes friends with delicious tears;
Restored me, loved me, put me on a par
With his great self. How can I pay Jaffâr?"

Haroun, who felt that on a soul like this
The mightiest vengeance could but fall amiss,
Now deigned to smile, as one great lord of fate
Might smile upon another half as great.
He said, "Let worth grow frenzied if it will;
The caliph's judgment shall be master still.
Go: and since gifts so move thee, take this gem,
The richest in the Tartar's diadem,
And hold the giver as thou deemest fit!"

"Gifts!" cried the friend; he took, and holding it
High toward the heavens, as though to meet his star,
Exclaimed, "This, too, I owe to thee, Jaffâr!"

Leigh Hunt [1784-1859]

COUNSEL

If thou shouldst bid thy friend farewell,
But for one night though that farewell may be,
Press thou his hand in thine; thou canst not tell
How far from thee

Fate or caprice may lead his feet
Ere that to-morrow come. Men have been known
Lightly to turn the corner of a street,
And days have grown

To months, and months to lagging years,
Before they look on loving eyes again.
Parting, at best, is underlaid with tears,
With tears and pain,

Therefore, lest sudden death should come between,
Or time, or distance, clasp with pressure true
The palm of him who goeth forth; unseen,
Fate goeth too!

Yea, find thou always time to say
Some earnest word betwixt the idle talk,
Lest with thee henceforth ever, night and day,
Regret should walk.

Mary Evelyn Moore Davis [1852-1909]

TO A FRIEND

WHEN we were idlers with the loitering rills,
The need of human love we little noted:
Our love was nature; and the peace that floated
On the white mist, and dwelt upon the hills,
To sweet accord subdued our wayward wills:
One soul was ours, one mind, one heart devoted,
That, wisely doting, asked not why it doted,
And ours the unknown joy, which knowing kills.
But now I find how dear thou wert to me;
That man is more than half of nature's treasure,
Of that fair beauty which no eye can see,
Of that sweet music which no ear can measure;
And now the streams may sing for others' pleasure,
The hills sleep on in their eternity.

Hartley Coleridge [1796-1849]

“FAREWELL! BUT WHENEVER”

FAREWELL!—but whenever you welcome the hour
That awakens the night-song of mirth in your bower,
Then think of the friend who once welcomed it too,
And forgot his own griefs, to be happy with you.
His griefs may return,—not a hope may remain
Of the few that have brightened his pathway of pain,—
But he ne'er will forget the short vision that threw
Its enchantment around him, while ling'ring with you!
And still on that evening, when Pleasure fills up
To the highest top sparkle each heart and each cup,
Where'er my path lies, be it gloomy or bright,
My soul, happy friends, shall be with you that night;

2868 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

Shall join in your revels, your sports, and your wiles,
And return to me, beaming all o'er with your smiles,—
Too blest if it tell me that, 'mid the gay cheer,
Some kind voice had murmured, "I wish he were here!"

Let Fate do her worst, there are relics of joy,
Bright dreams of the past, which she cannot destroy;
Which come, in the night-time of sorrow and care,
And bring back the features that joy used to wear.
Long, long be my heart with such memories filled!
Like the vase in which roses have once been distilled,—
You may break, you may shatter the vase, if you will,
But the scent of the roses will hang round it still.

Thomas Moore [1779-1852]

"AWAKE! AWAKE!"

From "Song of the Dawn"

AWAKE! awake! the stars are pale, the east is russet gray;
They fade, behold the phantoms fade, that keep the gates of
Day;
Throw wide the burning valves, and let the golden streets be
free,
The morning watch is past—the watch of evening shall not
be.

Put off, put off your mail, ye kings, and beat your brands
to dust;
A surer grasp your hands must know, your hearts a better
trust;
Nay, bend aback the lance's point, and break the helmet
bar,—
A noise is on the morning winds; but not the noise of war!

For aye, the time of wrath is past, and near the time of rest,
And honor binds the brow of man, and faithfulness his
breast,
Behold, the time of wrath is past, and righteousness shall be,
And the Wolf is dead in Arcady and the Dragon in the sea!

John Ruskin [1819-1900]

THE VOICE OF TOIL

I HEARD men saying, Leave hope and praying.
All days shall be as all have been;
To-day and to-morrow bring fear and sorrow,
The never-ending toil between.

When Earth was young 'mid toil and hunger,
In hope we strove, and our hands were strong;
Then great men led us, with words they fed us,
And bade us right the earthly wrong.

Go read in story their deeds and glory,
Their names amidst the nameless dead;
Turn then from lying to us slow-dying
In that good world to which they led;

Where fast and faster our iron master,
The thing we made, for ever drives,
Bids us grind treasure and fashion pleasure
For other hopes and other lives;

Where home is a hovel and dull we grovel,
Forgetting that the world is fair;
Where no babe we cherish, lest its very soul perish;
Where mirth is crime, and love a snare.

Who now shall lead us, what god shall heed us
As we lie in the hell our hands have won?
For us are no rulers but fools and befoolers,
The great are fallen, the wise men gone.

I heard men saying, Leave tears and praying,
The sharp knife heedeth not the sheep;
Are we not stronger than the rich and the wronger,
When day breaks over dreams and sleep?

Come, shoulder to shoulder ere the world grows older!
Help lies in naught but thee and me;
Hope is before us, and the long years that bore us
Bore leaders more than men may be.

2870 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

Let dead hearts tarry and trade and marry,
And trembling nurse their dreams of mirth,
While we the living our lives are giving
To bring the bright new world to birth.

Come, shoulder to shoulder ere earth grows older!
The Cause spreads over land and sea;
Now the world shaketh, and fear awaketh,
And joy at last for thee and me.

William Morris [1834-1896]

TOM DUNSTAN, OR, THE POLITICIAN

Now poor Tom Dunstan's cold,
Our shop is duller;
Scarce a story is told,
And our chat has lost the old
Red-republican color!
Though he was sickly and thin,
'Twas a sight to see his face—
While, sick of the country's sin,
With bang of the fist, and chin
Thrust out, he argued the case!
He prophesied folk should be free,
And the money-bags be bled—
"She's coming, she's coming!" said he;
"Courage, boys! wait and see!
Freedom's ahead!"

All day we sat in the heat,
Like spiders spinning,
Stitching full fine and fleet,
While the old Jew on his seat
Sat greasily grinning:
And there Tom said his say,
And prophesied Tyranny's death,
And the tallow burnt all day,
And we stitched and stitched away
In the thick smoke of our breath,
Wearily, wearily,

With hearts as heavy as lead—
But "Patience, she's coming!" said he;
"Courage, boys! wait and see!
Freedom's ahead!"

And at night, when we took here
The rest allowed to us,
The paper came with the beer,
And Tom read, sharp and clear,
The news out loud to us;
And then, in his witty way,
He threw the jests about—
The cutting things he'd say
Of the wealthy and the gay!
How he turned them inside out!
And it made our breath more free
To hearken to what he said—
"She's coming, she's coming!" said he;
"Courage, boys! wait and see!
Freedom's ahead!"

But grim Jack Hart, with a sneer,
Would mutter, "Master,
If Freedom means to appear,
I think she might step here
A little faster!"
Then it was fine to see Tom flame,
And argue and prove and preach,
Till Jack was silent for shame,
Or a fit of coughing came
O' sudden to spoil Tom's speech.
Ah! Tom had the eyes to see,
When Tyranny should be sped;
"She's coming, she's coming!" said he;
"Courage, boys! wait and see!
Freedom's ahead!"

But Tom was little and weak;
The hard hours shook him;
Hollower grew his cheek,
And when he began to speak

The coughing took him.
 Ere long the cheery sound
 Of his chat among us ceased,
 And we made a purse all round,
 That he might not starve, at least;
 His pain was sorry to see,
 Yet there, on his poor sick-bed,
 "She's coming, in spite of me!
 Courage, and wait!" cried he,
 "Freedom's ahead!"

A little before he died,
 To see his passion!
 "Bring me a paper!" he cried,
 And then to study it tried
 In his old sharp fashion;
 And with eyeballs glittering
 His look on me he bent,
 And said that savage thing
 Of the lords of the Parliament.
 Then, darkening, smiling on me,
 "What matter if one be dead?
 She's coming, at last!" said he;
 "Courage, boys! wait and see!
 Freedom's ahead!"

Ay, now Tom Dunstan's cold,
 The shop feels duller;
 Scarce a story is told,
 And our talk has lost the old
 Red-republican color.
 But we see a figure gray,
 And we hear a voice of death,
 And the tallow burns all day,
 And we stitch and stitch away,
 In the thick smoke of our breath;
 Ay, while in the dark sit we,
 Tom seems to call from the dead—
 "She's coming, she's coming!" says he;
 "Courage, boys! wait and see!
 "Freedom's ahead!"

To a New York Shop-Girl 2873

How long, O Lord, how long
Doth Thy handmaid linger?
She who shall right the wrong?
Make the oppressèd strong?—
Sweet morrow, bring her!
Hasten her over the sea,
O Lord, ere hope be fled—
Bring her to men and to me!
O slave, pray still on thy knee—
“Freedom’s ahead!”

Robert Buchanan [1841-1901]

THE COMMON STREET

THE common street climbed up against the sky,
Gray meeting gray; and wearily to and fro
I saw the patient common people go,
Each, with his sordid burden, trudging by.
And the rain dropped; there was not any sigh
Or stir of a live wind; dull, dull and slow
All motion; as a tale told long ago
The faded world; and creeping night drew nigh.

Then burst the sunset, flooding far and fleet,
Leavening the whole of life with magic leaven.
Suddenly down the long wet glistening hill
Pure splendor poured—and lo! the common street,
A golden highway into golden heaven,
With the dark shapes of men ascending still.

Helen Gray Cone [1859-

TO A NEW YORK SHOP-GIRL DRESSED FOR
SUNDAY

TO-DAY I saw the shop-girl go
Down gay Broadway to meet her beau.

Conspicuous, splendid, conscious, sweet,
She spread abroad and took the street.

2874 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

And all that niceness would forbid,
Superb, she smiled upon and did.

Let other girls, whose happier days
Preserve the perfume of their ways,

Go modestly. The passing hour
Adds splendor to their opening flower.

But from this child too swift a doom
Must steal her prettiness and bloom,

Toil and weariness hide the grace
That pleads a moment from her face.

So blame her not if for a day
She flaunts her glories while she may.

She half perceives, half understands,
Snatching her gifts with both her hands.

The little strut beneath the skirt
That lags neglected in the dirt,

The indolent swagger down the street—
Who can condemn such happy feet!

Innocent! vulgar—that's the truth!
But with the darling wiles of youth!

The bright, self-conscious eyes that stare
With such hauteur, beneath such hair!
Perhaps the men will find me fair!

Charming and charmed, flippant, arrayed,
Fluttered and foolish, proud, displayed,
Infinite pathos of parade!

The bangles and the narrowed waist—
The tinsel'd boa—forgive the taste!

To a New York Shop-Girl 2875

Oh, the starved nights she gave for that,
And bartered bread to buy her hat!

She flows before the reproachful sage
And begs her woman's heritage.

Dear child, with the defiant eyes,
Insolent with the half surmise
We do not quite admire, I know
How foresight frowns on this vain show!

And judgment, wearily sad, may see
No grace in such frivolity.

Yet which of us was ever bold
To worship Beauty, hungry and cold!

Scorn famine down, proudly expressed
Apostle to what things are best.

Let him who starves to buy the food
For his soul's comfort find her good,

Nor chide the frills and furbelows
That are the prettiest things she knows.

Poet and prophet in God's eyes
Make no more perfect sacrifice.

Who knows before what inner shrine
She eats with them the bread and wine?

Poor waif! One of the sacred few
That madly sought the best they knew!

Dear—let me lean my cheek to-night
Close, close to yours. Ah, that is right.

How warm and near! At last I see
One beauty shines for thee and me.

So let us love and understand—
Whose hearts are hidden in God's hand.

2876 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

And we will cherish your brief Spring
And all its fragile flowering.

God loves all prettiness, and on this
Surely his angels lay their kiss.

Anna Hempstead Branch [18 -

SATURDAY NIGHT

THE lights of Saturday night beat golden, golden over the
pillared street;

The long plate-glass of a Dream-World olden is as the foot-
lights shining sweet.

Street-lamp—flambeau—glamor of trolley—comet-trail of
the trains above,

Splash where the jostling crowds are jolly with echoing
laughter and human love.

This is the City of the Enchanted, and these are her En-
chanted People;

Far and far is Daylight, haunted with whistle of mill and
bell of steeple.

The Eastern tenements loose the women, the Western flats
release the wives

To touch, where all the ways are common, a glory to their
sweated lives.

The leather of shoes in the brilliant casement sheds a luster
over the heart;

The high-heaped fruit in the flaring basement glows with
the tints of Turner's art.

Darwin's dream and the eye of Spencer saw not such a
gloried race

As here, in copper light intenser than desert sun, glides face
by face.

The drab washwoman dazed and breathless, ray-chiseled in
the golden stream,

Is a magic statue standing deathless—her tub and soap-suds
touched with Dream.

Yea, in this people, glamor-sunnied, democracy wins heaven
again;

Here the unlearned and the unmoneyed laugh in the lights
of Lover's Lane!

O Dream-World lights that lift through the ether millions
of miles to the Milky Way!

To-night Earth rolls through a golden weather that lights
the Pleiades where they play!

Yet . . . God? Does he lead these sons and daughters?

Yea, do they feel with a passion that stills,

God on the face of the moving waters, God in the quiet of
the hills?

Yet . . . what if the million-mantled mountains, and what
if the million-moving sea

Are here alone in façades and fountains—our deep stone-
world of humanity—

We builders of cities and civilizations walled away from the
sea and the sod

Must reach, dream-led, for our revelations through one an-
other—as far as God.

Through one another—through one another—no more the
gleam on sea or land

But so close that we see the Brother—and understand—and
understand!

Till, drawn in swept crowd closer, closer, we see the gleam in
the human clod,

And clerk and foreman, peddler and grocer, are in our
Family of God!

James Oppenheim [1882—

THE BARREL-ORGAN

THERE's a barrel-organ caroling across a golden street,

In the City as the sun sinks low;

And the music's not immortal; but the world has made it
sweet

And fulfilled it with the sunset glow;

2878 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

And it pulses through the pleasures of the City and the
pain

That surround the singing organ like a large eternal
light;

And they've given it a glory and a part to play again
In the Symphony that rules the day and night.

And now it's marching onward through the realms of old
romance,

And trolling out a fond familiar tune,

And now it's roaring cannon down to fight the King of
France,

And now it's prattling softly to the moon,

And all around the organ there's a sea without a shore

Of human joys and wonders and regrets;

To remember and to recompense the music evermore

For what the cold machinery forgets. . . .

Yes; as the music changes,

Like a prismatic glass,

It takes the light and ranges

Through all the moods that pass;

Dissects the common carnival

Of passions and regrets,

And gives the world a glimpse of all

The colors it forgets.

And there *La Traviata* sighs

Another sadder song;

And there *Il Trovatore* cries

A tale of deeper wrong;

And bolder knights to battle go

With sword and shield and lance,

Than ever here on earth below

Have whirled into—a *dance*!—

Go down to Kew in lilac-time, in lilac-time, in lilac-time;

Go down to Kew in lilac-time (it isn't far from London!)

And you shall wander hand in hand with love in summer's
wonderland;

Go down to Kew in lilac-time (it isn't far from London!)

The cherry-trees are seas of bloom and soft perfume and
sweet perfume,

The cherry-trees are seas of bloom (and oh, so near to London!)

And there they say, when dawn is high and all the world's a
blaze of sky

The cuckoo, though he's very shy, will sing a song for London.

The nightingale is rather rare and yet they say you'll hear
him there

At Kew, at Kew in lilac-time (and oh, so near to London!)

The linnet and the throstle, too, and after dark the long
halloo

And golden-eyed *tu-whit, tu-whoo* of owls that ogle London.

Nor Noah hardly knew a bird of any kind that isn't heard
At Kew, at Kew in lilac-time (and oh, so near to London!)

And when the rose begins to pout and all the chestnut spires
are out

You'll hear the rest without a doubt, all chorusing for
London:—

*Come down to Kew in lilac-time, in lilac-time, in lilac-time;
Come down to Kew in lilac-time (it isn't far from London!)*
*And you shall wander hand in hand with Love in summer's
wonderland;*

Come down to Kew in lilac-time (it isn't far from London!)

And then the troubadour begins to thrill the golden street,
In the City as the sun sinks low;

And in all the gaudy busses there are scores of weary feet
Marking time, sweet time, with a dull mechanic beat,
And a thousand hearts are plunging to a love they'll never
meet,

Through the meadows of the sunset, through the poppies
and the wheat,

In the land where the dead dreams go.

2880 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

Verdi, Verdi, when you wrote *Il Trovatore* did you dream
Of the City when the sun sinks low
Of the organ and the monkey and the many-colored stream
On the Piccadilly pavement, of the myriad eyes that seem
To be litten for a moment with a wild Italian gleam
As *A che la morte* parodies the world's eternal theme
And pulses with the sunset-glow?

There's a thief, perhaps, that listens with a face of frozen
stone
In the City as the sun sinks low;
There's a portly man of business with a balance of his own,
There's a clerk and there's a butcher of a soft reposeful tone,
And they're all of them returning to the heavens they have
known:
They are crammed and jammed in busses and—they're each
of them alone
In the land where the dead dreams go.

There's a very modish woman and her smile is very bland
In the City as the sun sinks low;
And her hansom jingles onward, but her little jeweled hand
Is clenched a little tighter and she cannot understand
What she wants or why she wanders to that undiscovered
land,
For the parties there are not at all the sort of thing she
planned,
In the land where the dead dreams go.

There's an Oxford man that listens and his heart is crying
out
In the City as the sun sinks low;
For the barge, the eight, the Isis, and the coach's whoop and
shout,
For the minute-gun, the counting and the long disheveled
rout,
For the howl along the tow-path and a fate that's still in
doubt,
For a roughened oar to handle and a race to think about
In the land where the dead dreams go.

There's a laborer that listens to the voices of the dead
In the City as the sun sinks low;
And his hand begins to tremble and his face is rather red
As he sees a loafer watching him and—there he turns his
head
And stares into the sunset where his April love is fled,
For he hears her softly singing and his lonely soul is led
Through the land where the dead dreams go.

There's an old and hardened demi-rep, it's ringing in her
ears,
In the City as the sun sinks low;
With the wild and empty sorrow of the love that blights and
sears,
Oh, and if she hurries onward, then be sure, be sure she
hears,
Hears and bears the bitter burden of the unforgotten years,
And her laugh's a little harsher and her eyes are brimmed
with tears
For the land where the dead dreams go.

There's a barrel-organ carolling across a golden street
In the City as the sun sinks low;
Though the music's only Verdi there's a world to make it
sweet
Just as yonder yellow sunset where the earth and heaven
meet
Mellows all the sooty City! Hark, a hundred thousand feet
Are marching on to glory through the poppies and the wheat
In the land where the dead dreams go.

So it's Jeremiah, Jeremiah,
What have you to say
When you meet the garland girls
Tripping on their way?

All around my gala hat
I wear a wreath of roses
(A long and lonely year it is
I've waited for the May!)

2882 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

If any one should ask you,
The reason why I wear it is
My own love, my true love is coming home to-day.

And it's buy a bunch of violets for the lady
(*It's lilac-time in London; it's lilac-time in London!*)
Buy a bunch of violets for the lady;
While the sky burns blue above:

On the other side the street you'll find it shady
(*It's lilac-time in London; it's lilac-time in London!*)
But buy a bunch of violets for the lady,
And tell her she's your own true love.

There's a barrel-organ carolling across a golden street
In the City as the suns sink glittering and slow;
And the music's not immortal; but the world has made it
sweet
And enriched it with the harmonies that make a song complete
In the deeper heavens of music where the night and morning
meet,
As it dies into the sunset glow;

And it pulses through the pleasures of the City and the pain
That surround the singing organ like a large eternal light,
And they've given it a glory and a part to play again
In the Symphony that rules the day and night.

And there, as the music changes,
The song runs round again;
Once more it turns and ranges
Through all its joy and pain:
Dissects the common carnival
Of passions and regrets;
And the wheeling world remembers all
The wheeling song forgets.

Once more *La Traviata* sighs
Another sadder song:
Once more *Il Trovatore* cries
A tale of deeper wrong;

Once more the knights to battle go
 With sword and shield and lance,
 Till once, once more, the shattered foe
 Has whirled into—a dance!

*Come down to Kew in lilac-time, in lilac-time, in lilac-time;
 Come down to Kew in lilac-time (it isn't far from London!)
 And you shall wander hand in hand with Love in summer's
 wonderland,
 Come down to Kew in lilac-time (it isn't far from London!)*
 Alfred Noyes [1880—

AMANTIUM IRÆ

From "The Paradise of Dainty Devices"

IN going to my naked bed, as one that would have slept,
 I heard a wife sing to her child, that long before had wept.
 She sighèd sore, and sang full sweet to bring the babe to
 rest,
 That would not cease, but crièd still, in sucking at her
 breast.
 She was full weary of her watch, and grievèd with her child;
 She rockèd it, and rated it, till that on her it smiled.
 Then did she say, "Now have I found this proverb true to
 prove,
The falling out of faithful friends, renewing is of love."

Then took I paper, pen, and ink, this proverb for to write,
 In register for to remain of such a worthy wight.
 As she proceeded thus in song unto her little brat
 Much matter uttered she of weight, in place whereas she
 sat:
 And provèd plain there was no beast, nor creature bearing
 life
 Could well be known to live in love, without discord and
 strife.
 Then kissèd she her little babe, and sware, by God above.
The falling out of faithful friends, renewing is of love.

2884 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

She said that neither king, nor prince, nor lord could live
 aright,
 Until their puissance they did prove, their manhood, and
 their might,
 When manhood shall be matchèd so, that fear can take no
 place,
 Then weary works make warriors each other to embrace,
 And leave their force that failèd them; which did consume
 the rout
 That might before have lived their time, their strength and
 nature out.
 Then did she sing, as one that thought no man could her
 reprove,
The falling out of faithful friends, renewing is of love.

She said she saw no fish, nor fowl, nor beast within her
 haunt
 That met a stranger in their kind, but could give it a taunt.
 Since flesh might not endure, but rest must wrath succeed,
 And force the fight to fall to play, in pasture where they
 feed,
 So noble Nature can well end the work she hath begun;
 And bridle well that will not cease her tragedy in some.
 Thus in her song she oft rehearsed, as did her well behave,
The falling out of faithful friends, renewing is of love.

"I marvel much, pardy," quoth she, "for to behold the
 rout,
 To see man, woman, boy, and beast, to toss the world about;
 Some kneel, some crouch, some beck, some check, and some
 can smoothly smile,
 And some embrace others in arms, and there think many a
 wile.
 Some stand aloof at cap and knee, some humble, and some
 stout,
 Yet are they never friends in deed, until they once fall out."
 Thus ended she her song, and said before she did remove,
"The falling out of faithful friends, renewing is of love."

Richard Edwards [1523?-1566]

QUA CURSUM VENTUS

As ships, becalmed at eve, that lay
With canvas drooping, side by side,
Two towers of sail at dawn of day
Are scarce long leagues apart descried;

When fell the night, upsprung the breeze,
And all the darkling hours they plied,
Nor dreamt but each the self-same seas
By each was cleaving, side by side:

E'en so—but why the tale reveal
Of those, whom year by year unchanged,
Brief absence joined anew to feel,
Astounded, soul from soul estranged?

At dead of night their sails were filled,
And onward each rejoicing steered—
Ah, neither blame, for neither willed,
Or wist, what first with dawn appeared!

To veer, how vain! On, onward strain,
Brave barks! In light, in darkness too,
Through winds and tides one compass guides—
To that, and your own selves, be true.

But O blithe breeze! and O great seas,
Though ne'er, that earliest parting past,
On your wide plain they join again,
Together lead them home at last.

One port, methought, alike they sought,
One purpose hold where'er they fare,—
O bounding breeze, O rushing seas!
At last, at last, unite them there!

Arthur Hugh Clough [1819-1861]

“FOR A’ THAT AND A’ THAT”

Is there, for honest Poverty,
 That hangs his head, and a’ that!
 The coward slave, we pass him by,
 We dare be poor for a’ that!
 For a’ that, and a’ that,
 Our toil’s obscure, and a’ that;
 The rank is but the guinea’s stamp,
 The Man’s the gowd for a’ that.

What though on hamely fare we dine,
 Wear hoddin gray, and a’ that;
 Gie fools their silks, and knaves their wine,
 A Man’s a Man for a’ that.
 For a’ that, and a’ that,
 Their tinsel show, and a’ that;
 The honest man, though e’er sae poor,
 Is king o’ men for a’ that.

Ye see yon birkie, ca’d a lord,
 Wha struts, and stares, and a’ that;
 Though hundreds worship at his word,
 He’s but a coof for a’ that;
 For a’ that, and a’ that,
 His ribbon, star, and a’ that;
 The man o’ independent mind,
 He looks and laughs at a’ that.

A prince can mak a belted knight,
 A marquis, duke, and a’ that;
 But an honest man’s aboon his might,
 Guid faith, he maunna fa’ that!
 For a’ that, and a’ that,
 Their dignities, and a’ that,
 The pith o’ sense, and pride o’ worth,
 Are higher rank than a’ that.

Then let us pray that come it may,—
 As come it will for a' that,—
 That Sense and Worth, o'er a' the earth,
 May bear the gree, and a' that.
 For a' that, and a' that,
 It's coming yet, for a' that,—
 That Man to Man, the warld o'er,
 Shall brothers be for a' that!

Robert Burns [1759-1796]

"WE ARE BRETHERN A' "

A HAPPY bit hame this auld world would be
 If men, when they're here, could make shift to agree,
 An' ilk said to his neebor, in cottage an' ha',
 "Come, gi'e me your hand,—we are brethren a'."

I ken na why ane wi' anither should fight,
 When to 'gree would make a' body cosie an' right,
 When man meets wi' man, 'tis the best way ava,
 To say, "Gi'e me your hand,—we are brethren a'."

My coat is a coarse ane, an' yours may be fine,
 And I maun drink water, while you may drink wine;
 But we baith ha'e a leal heart, unspotted to shaw:
 Sae gi'e me your hand,—we are brethren a'.

The knave ye would scorn, the unfaithfu' deride;
 Ye would stand like a rock, wi' the truth on your side;
 Sae would I, an' naught else would I value a straw:
 Then gi'e me your hand,—we are brethren a'.

Ye would scorn to do fausely by woman or man;
 I haud by the right aye, as well as I can;
 We are ane in our joys, our affections, an' a':
 Come, gi'e me your hand,—we are brethren a'.

Your mother has lo'ed you as mithers can lo'e;
 An' mine has done for me what mithers can do;
 We are ane high an' laigh, an' we shouldna be twa:
 Sae gi'e me your hand,—we are brethren a'.

2888 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

We love the same simmer day, sunny an' fair;
Hame! oh, how we love it, an' a' that are there!
Frae the pure air o' heaven the same life we draw:
Come, gi'e me your hand,—we are brethren a'.

Frail shakin' auld age will soon come o'er us baith,
An' creepin' along at his back will be death;
Syne into the same mither-yird we will fa':
Come, gi'e me your hand,—we are brethren a'.

Robert Nicoll [1814-1837]

FRATERNITY

I KNOW not but in every leaf
That sprang to life along with me,
Were written all the joy and grief
Thenceforth my fate to be.

The wind that whispered to the earth,
The bird that sang its earliest lay,
The flower that blossomed at my birth—
My kinsmen all were they.

Ay, but for fellowship with these
I had not been—nay, might not be;
Nor they but vagrant melodies
Till harmonized by me.

John Banister Tabb [1845-1909]

SONNET

Most men know love but as a part of life;
They hide it in some corner of the breast,
Even from themselves; and only when they rest
In the brief pauses of that daily strife,
Wherewith the world might else be not so rife,
They draw it forth (as one draws forth a toy
To soothe some ardent, kiss-exacting boy)
And hold it up to sister, child, or wife.

Ah me! why may not love and life be one?
Why walk we thus alone, when by our side,
Love, like a visible God, might be our guide?
How would the marts grow noble! and the street,
Worn like a dungeon-floor by weary feet,
Seem then a golden court-way of the Sun!

Henry Timrod [1829-1867]

SIC ITUR

As, at a railway junction, men
Who came together, taking then
One the train up, one down, again

Meet never! Ah, much more as they
Who take one street's two sides, and say
Hard parting words, but walk one way:

Though moving other mates between,
While carts and coaches intervene,
Each to the other goes unseen;

Yet seldom, surely, shall there lack
Knowledge they walk not back to back,
But with an unity of track,

Where common dangers each attend,
And common hopes their guidance lend
To light them to the self-same end.

Whether he then shall cross to thee,
Or thou go thither, or it be
Some midway point, yet ye shall see

Each other, yet again shall meet.
Ah, joy! when with the closing street,
Forgivingly at last ye greet!

Arthur Hugh Clough [1819-1861]

VERSES

SUPPOSED TO BE WRITTEN BY ALEXANDER SELKIRK DURING
HIS SOLITARY ABODE ON THE ISLAND OF JUAN FERNANDEZ

I AM monarch of all I survey;
My right there is none to dispute;
From the center all round to the sea
I am lord of the fowl and the brute.
O Solitude! where are the charms
That sages have seen in thy face?
Better dwell in the midst of alarms,
Than reign in this horrible place.

I am out of humanity's reach,
I must finish my journey alone,
Never hear the sweet music of speech;
I start at the sound of my own.
The beasts that roam over the plain
My form with indifference see;
They are so unacquainted with man,
Their tameness is shocking to me.

Society, Friendship, and Love,
Divinely bestowed upon man,
O, had I the wings of a dove
How soon would I taste you again!
My sorrows I then might assuage
In the ways of religion and truth,
Might learn from the wisdom of age,
And be cheered by the sallies of youth.

Religion! what treasure untold
Resides in that heavenly word!
More precious than silver and gold,
Or all that this earth can afford.
But the sound of the church-going bell
These valleys and rocks never heard,
Nor sighed at the sound of a knell,
Or smiled when a Sabbath appeared.

“Blow, Blow, Thou Winter Wind” 2891

Ye winds, that have made me your sport,
Convey to this desolate shore
Some cordial endearing report
Of a land I shall visit no more:
My friends,—do they now and then send
A wish or a thought after me?
O tell me I yet have a friend,
Though a friend I am never to see.

How fleet is a glance of the mind!
Compared with the speed of its flight,
The tempest itself lags behind,
And the swift-wingèd arrows of light.
When I think of my own native land,
In a moment I seem to be there;
But alas! recollection at hand
Soon hurries me back to despair.

But the sea-fowl is gone to her nest,
The beast is laid down in his lair;
Even here is a season of rest,
And I to my cabin repair.
There's mercy in every place,
And mercy, encouraging thought!
Gives even affliction a grace
And reconciles man to his lot.

William Cowper [1731-1800]

“BLOW, BLOW, THOU WINTER WIND”

From “As You Like It”

BLOW, blow, thou winter wind,
Thou art not so unkind
As man's ingratitude;
Thy tooth is not so keen,
Because thou art not seen,
Although thy breath be rude.
Heigh-ho! sing heigh-ho! unto the green holly;
Most friendship is feigning, most loving mere folly:
Then, heigh-ho, the holly!
This life is most jolly!

2892 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

Freeze, freeze, thou bitter sky,
Thou dost not bite so nigh
As benefits forgot:
Though thou the waters warp,
Thy sting is not so sharp
As friend remembered not.
Heigh-ho! sing heigh-ho! unto the green holly;
Most friendship is feigning, most loving mere folly:
Then, heigh-ho, the holly!
This life is most jolly!

William Shakespeare [1564-1616]

THE HOUSE BY THE SIDE OF THE ROAD

THERE are hermit souls that live withdrawn
In the place of their self-content;
There are souls like stars, that dwell apart,
In a fellowless firmament;
There are pioneer souls that blaze their paths
Where highways never ran—
But let me live by the side of the road
And be a friend to man.

Let me live in a house by the side of the road
Where the race of men go by—
The men who are good and the men who are bad,
As good and as bad as I.
I would not sit in the scorner's seat
Or hurl the cynic's ban—
Let me live in a house by the side of the road
And be a friend to man.

I see from my house by the side of the road,
By the side of the highway of life,
The men who press with the ardor of hope,
The men who are faint with the strife,
But I turn not away from their smiles nor their tears,
Both parts of an infinite plan—
Let me live in a house by the side of the road
And be a friend to man.

I know there are brook-gladdened meadows ahead,
 And mountains of wearisome height;
 That the road passes on through the long afternoon
 And stretches away to the night.
 And still I rejoice when the travelers rejoice
 And weep with the strangers that moan,
 Nor live in my house by the side of the road
 Like a man who dwells alone.

Let me live in my house by the side of the road,
 It's here the race of men go by—
 They are good, they are bad, they are weak, they are strong,
 Wise, foolish—so am I.
 Then why should I sit in the scorner's seat,
 Or hurl the cynic's ban?
 Let me live in my house by the side of the road
 And be a friend to man.

Sam Walter Foss [1858-1911]

THE MAN WITH THE HOE

WRITTEN AFTER SEEING MILLET'S WORLD-FAMOUS PAINTING

God made man in His own image, in the image of God made He him.
 —GENESIS

BOWED by the weight of centuries he leans
 Upon his hoe and gazes on the ground,
 The emptiness of ages in his face,
 And on his back the burden of the world.
 Who made him dead to rapture and despair,
 A thing that grieves not and that never hopes,
 Stolid and stunned, a brother to the ox?
 Who loosened and let down this brutal jaw?
 Whose was the hand that slanted back this brow?
 Whose breath blew out the light within this brain?

Is this the Thing the Lord God made and gave
 To have dominion over sea and land;
 To trace the stars and search the heavens for power;
 To feel the passion of Eternity?

2894 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

Is this the Dream He dreamed who shaped the suns
 And marked their ways upon the ancient deep?
 Down all the stretch of Hell to its last gulf
 There is no shape more terrible than this—
 More tongued with censure of the world's blind greed—
 More filled with signs and portents for the soul—
 More fraught with menace to the universe.

What gulfs between him and the seraphim!
 Slave of the wheel of labor, what to him
 Are Plato and the swing of Pleiades?
 What the long reaches of the peaks of song,
 The rift of dawn, the reddening of the rose?
 Through this dread shape the suffering ages look;
 Time's tragedy is in that aching stoop;
 Through this dread shape humanity betrayed,
 Plundered, profaned and disinherited,
 Cries protest to the Judges of the World,
 A protest that is also prophecy.

O masters, lords and rulers in all lands,
 Is this the handiwork you give to God,
 This monstrous thing distorted and soul-quenched?
 How will you ever straighten up this shape;
 Touch it again with immortality;
 Give back the upward looking and the light;
 Rebuild in it the music and the dream;
 Make right the immemorial infamies,
 Perfidious wrongs, immedicable woes?

O masters, lords and rulers in all lands,
 How will the Future reckon with this Man?
 How answer his brute question in that hour
 When whirlwinds of rebellion shake the world?
 How will it be with kingdoms and with kings—
 With those who shaped him to the thing he is—
 When this dumb Terror shall reply to God,
 After the silence of the centuries?

Edwin Markham [1852-

THE MAN WITH THE HOE

A REPLY

Let us a little permit Nature to take her own way: she better understands her own affairs than we.—MONTAIGNE

NATURE reads not our labels, "great" and "small";
Accepts she one and all

Who, striving, win and hold the vacant place;
All are of royal race.

Him, there, rough-cast, with rigid arm and limb,
The Mother molded him,

Of his rude realm ruler and demigod,
Lord of the rock and clod.

With Nature is no "better" and no "worse,"
On this bared head no curse.

Humbled it is and bowed; so is he crowned
Whose kingdom is the ground.

Diverse the burdens on the one stern road
Where bears each back its load;

Varied the toil, but neither high nor low.
With pen or sword or hoe,

He that has put out strength, lo, he is strong;
Of him with spade or song

Nature but questions,—“This one, shall he stay?”
She answers “Yea,” or “Nay,”

“Well, ill, he digs, he sings”; and he bides on,
Or shudders, and is gone.

Strength shall he have, the toiler, strength and grace,
So fitted to his place

2896 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

As he leaned, there, an oak where sea winds blow,
Our brother with the hoe.

No blot, no monster, no unsightly thing,
The soil's long-lineaged king;

His changeless realm, he knows it and commands;
Erect enough he stands,

Tall as his toil. Nor does he bow unblest:
Labor he has, and rest.

Need was, need is, and need will ever be
For him and such as he;

Cast for the gap, with gnarlèd arm and limb,
The Mother molded him,—

Long wrought, and molded him with mother's care,
Before she set him there.

And aye she gives him, mindful of her own,
Peace of the plant, the stone;

Yea, since above his work he may not rise,
She makes the field his skies.

See! she that bore him, and metes out the lot,
He serves her. Vex him not

To scorn the rock whence he was hewn, the pit
And what was digged from it;

Lest he no more in native virtue stand,
The earth-sword in his hand,

But follow sorry phantoms to and fro,
And let a kingdom go.

John Vance Cheney [1848-

AULD LANG SYNE

SHOULD auld acquaintance be forgot,
And never brought to min'?
Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And days o' lang syne?

For auld lang syne, my dear,
For auld lang syne,
We'll tak a cup o' kindness yet
For auld lang syne.

We twa hae rin about the braes,
And pu'd the gowans fine;
But we've wandered monie a weary fit
Sin' auld lang syne.

We twa hae paidl't i' the burn,
Frae mornin' sun till dine;
But seas between us braid hae roared
Sin' auld lang syne.

And here's a hand, my trusty fiere,
And gie's a hand o' thine;
And we'll tak a right guid willie-waught
For auld lang syne.

And surely ye'll be your pint-stowp,
And surely I'll be mine,
And we'll tak a cup o' kindness yet
For auld lang syne!

Robert Burns [1759-1796]

THE MUSIC-MAKERS

ISRAFEL

And the angel Israfel, whose heart-strings are a lute, and who has the sweetest voice of all God's creatures.—KORAN

IN Heaven a spirit doth dwell
Whose heart-strings are a lute;
None sing so wildly well
As the angel Israfel,
And the giddy stars (so legends tell),
Ceasing their hymns, attend the spell
Of his voice, all mute.

Tottering above
In her highest noon,
The enamoured moon
Blushes with love,
While, to listen, the red levin
(With the rapid Pleiads, even,
Which were seven)
Pauses in Heaven.

And they say (the starry choir
And the other listening things)
That Israfeli's fire
Is owing to that lyre
By which he sits and sings,
The trembling living wire
Of those unusual strings.

But the skies that angel trod,
Where deep thoughts are a duty,
Where Love's a grown-up God,
Where the Houri glances are
Imbued with all the beauty
Which we worship in a star.

Therefore thou art not wrong,
 Israfeli, who despisest
An unimpassioned song;
To thee the laurels belong,
 Best bard, because the wisest:
Merrily live, and long!

The ecstasies above
 With thy burning measures suit:
Thy grief, thy joy, thy hate, thy love,
 With the fervor of thy lute:
Well may the stars be mute!

Yes, Heaven is thine; but this
 Is a world of sweets and sour;
 Our flowers are merely—flowers,
And the shadow of thy perfect bliss
 Is the sunshine of ours.

If I could dwell
Where Israfel
 Hath dwelt, and he where I,
He might not sing so wildly well
 A mortal melody,
While a bolder note than this might swell
 From my lyre within the sky.

Edgar Allan Poe [1809-1849]

PROEM

(WRITTEN TO INTRODUCE THE FIRST GENERAL COLLECTION
OF HIS POEMS)

I LOVE the old melodious lays
Which softly melt the ages through,
 The songs of Spenser's golden days,
 Arcadian Sidney's silvery phrase,
Sprinkling our noon of time with freshest morning dew.

2900 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

Yet, vainly in my quiet hours
To breathe their marvellous notes I try;
I feel them, as the leaves and flowers
In silence feel the dewy showers,
And drink with glad, still lips the blessing of the sky.

The rigor of a frozen clime,
The harshness of an untaught ear,
The jarring words of one whose rhyme
Beat often Labor's hurried time,
Or Duty's rugged march through storm and strife, are here.

Of mystic beauty, dreamy grace,
No rounded art the lack supplies;
Unskilled the subtle lines to trace,
Or softer shades of Nature's face,
I view her common forms with unanointed eyes.

Nor mine the seer-like power to show
The secrets of the heart and mind;
To drop the plummet-line below
Our common world of joy and woe,
A more intense despair or brighter hope to find.

Yet here at least an earnest sense
Of human right and weal is shown;
A hate of tyranny intense,
And hearty in its vehemence,
As if my brother's pain and sorrow were my own.

O Freedom! if to me belong
Nor mighty Milton's gift divine,
Nor Marvell's wit and graceful song,
Still with a love as deep and strong
As theirs, I lay, like them, my best gifts on thy shrine!
John Greenleaf Whittier [1807-1892]

EMBRYO

I **FEEL** a poem in my heart to-night,
A still thing growing,—
As if the darkness to the outer light
A song were owing:

A something strangely vague, and sweet, and sad,
Fair, fragile, slender;
Not tearful, yet not daring to be glad,
And oh, so tender!

It may not reach the outer world at all,
Despite its growing;
Upon a poem-bud such cold winds fall
To blight its blowing.
But, oh, whatever may the thing betide,
Free life or fetter,
My heart, just to have held it till it died,
Will be the better!

Mary Ashley Townsend [1832-1901]

THE SINGER'S PRELUDE

From "The Earthly Paradise"

OF Heaven or Hell I have no power to sing,
I cannot ease the burden of your fears,
Or make quick-coming death a little thing,
Or bring again the pleasure of past years,
Nor for my words shall ye forget your tears,
Or hope again for aught that I can say,
The idle singer of an empty day.

But rather, when awearry of your mirth,
From full hearts still unsatisfied ye sigh,
And, feeling kindly unto all the earth,
Grudge every minute as it passes by,
Made the more mindful that the sweet days die,—
Remember me a little then, I pray,
The idle singer of an empty day.

The heavy trouble, the bewildering care
That weighs us down who live and earn our bread,
These idle verses have no power to bear;
So let me sing of names remembered,
Because they, living not, can ne'er be dead,
Or long time take their memory quite away
From us poor singers of an empty day.

Dreamer of dreams, born out of my due time,
 Why should I strive to set the crooked straight?
 Let it suffice me that my murmuring rhyme
 Beats with light wing against the ivory gate,
 Telling a tale not too importunate
 To those who in the sleepy region stay,
 Lulled by the singer of an empty day.

Folk say, a wizard to a northern king
 At Christmas-tide such wondrous things did show,
 That through one window men beheld the spring,
 And through another saw the summer glow,
 And through a third the fruited vines a-row,
 While still, unheard, but in its wonted way,
 Piped the drear wind of that December day.

So with this Earthly Paradise it is,
 If ye will read aright, and pardon me,
 Who strive to build a shadowy isle of bliss
 Midmost the beating of the steely sea,
 Where tossed about all hearts of men must be;
 Whose ravening monsters mighty men shall slay,
 Not the poor singer of an empty day.

William Morris [1834-1896]

A PRELUDE

SPIRIT that moves the sap in spring,
 When lusty male birds fight and sing,
 Inform my words, and make my lines
 As sweet as flowers, as strong as vines.

Let mine be the freshening power
 Of rain on grass, of dew on flower;
 The fertilizing song be mine,
 Nut-flavored, racy, keen as wine.

Let some procreant truth exhale
 From me, before my forces fail;
 Or ere the ecstatic impulse go,
 Let all my buds to blossoms blow.

First Looking Into Chapman's Homer 2903

If quick, sound seed be wanting where
The virgin soil feels sun and air,
And longs to fill a higher state,
There let my meanings germinate.

Let not my strength be spilled for naught,
But, in some fresher vessel caught,
Be blended into sweeter forms,
And fraught with purer aims and charms.

Let bloom-dust of my life be blown
To quicken hearts that flower alone;
Around my knees let scions rise
With heavenward-pointed destinies.

And when I fall, like some old tree,
And subtile change makes mould of me,
There let earth show a fertile line
Whence perfect wild-flowers leap and shine!

Maurice Thompson [1844-1901]

ON FIRST LOOKING INTO CHAPMAN'S HOMER

MUCH have I travelled in the realms of gold,
And many goodly states and kingdoms seen;
Round many western islands have I been
Which bards in fcalty to Apollo hold.
Oft of one wide expanse had I been told
That deep-browed Homer ruled as his demesne:
Yet did I never breathe its pure serene
Till I heard Chapman speak out loud and bold:
Then felt I like some watcher of the skies
When a new planet swims into his ken;
Or like stout Cortez, when with eagle eyes
He stared at the Pacific—and all his men
Looked at each other with a wild surmise—
Silent, upon a peak in Darien.

John Keats [1795-1821]

THE ODYSSEY

As one that for a weary space has lain
 Lulled by the song of Circe and her wine
 In gardens near the pale of Proserpine,
 Where that Ææan isle forgets the main,
 And only the low lutes of love complain,
 And only shadows of wan lovers pine,
 As such an one were glad to know the brine
 Salt on his lips, and the large air again—
 So gladly, from the songs of modern speech
 Men turn, and see the stars, and feel the free
 Shrill wind beyond the close of heavy flowers,
 And through the music of the languid hours
 They hear like Ocean on a western beach
 The surge and thunder of the Odyssey.

Andrew Lang [1844-1912]

THE DEAREST POETS

WERE I to name, out of the times gone by,
 The poets dearest to me, I should say,
 Pulci for spirits, and a fine, free way;
 Chaucer for manners, and close, silent eye;
 Milton for classic taste, and harp strung high;
 Spenser for luxury, and sweet, sylvan play;
 Horace for chatting with, from day to day;
 Shakespeare for all, but most, society.
 But which take with me, could I take but one?
 Shakespeare,—as long as I was unoppressed
 With the world's weight, making sad thoughts intenser;
 But did I wish, out of the common sun
 To lay a wounded heart in leafy rest,
 And dream of things far off and healing,—Spenser.

Leigh Hunt [1784-1859]

FALSE POETS AND TRUE

LOOK how the lark soars upward and is gone,
 Turning a spirit as he nears the sky!
 His voice is heard, but body there is none
 To fix the vague excursions of the eye.

So, poets' songs are with us, though they die
Obscured, and hid by death's oblivious shroud,
And Earth inherits the rich melody
Like raining music from the morning cloud.
Yet few there be who pipe so sweet and loud
Their voices reach us through the lapse of space:
The noisy day is deafened by a crowd
Of undistinguished birds, a twittering race;
But only lark and nightingale forlorn
Fill up the silences of night and morn.

Thomas Hood [1799-1845]

A SINGING LESSON

FAR-FETCHED and dear bought, as the proverb rehearses,
Is good, or was held so, for ladies: but naught
In a song can be good if the turn of the verse is
Far-fetched and dear bought.

As the turn of a wave should it sound, and the thought
Ring smooth, and as light as the spray that disperses
Be the gleam of the words for the garb thereof wrought.

Let the soul in it shine through the sound as it pierces
Men's hearts with possession of music unsought;
For the bounties of song are no jealous god's mercies,
Far-fetched and dear bought.

Algernon Charles Swinburne [1837-1909]

POETRY

I AM the reality of things that seem;
The great transmuter, melting loss to gain,
Languor to love, and fining joy from pain.
I am the waking, who am called the dream;
I am the sun, all light reflects my gleam;
I am the altar-fire within the fane;
I am the force of the refreshing rain;
I am the sea to which flows every stream;
I am the utmost height there is to climb;

2906 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

I am the truth, mirrored in fancy's glass;
I am stability, all else will pass;
I am eternity, encircling time;
Kill me, none may; conquer me, nothing can—
I am God's soul, fused in the soul of man.

Ella Heath [18 -

THE INNER VISION

Most sweet it is with unuplifted eyes
To pace the ground, if path be there or none,
While a fair region round the traveller lies
Which he forbears again to look upon;
Pleased rather with some soft ideal scene,
The work of Fancy, or some happy tone
Of meditation, slipping in between
The beauty coming and the beauty gone.
—If Thought and Love desert us, from that day
Let us break off all commerce with the Muse:
With Thought and Love companions of our way—
Whate'er the senses take or may refuse,—
The Mind's internal heaven shall shed her dew
Of inspiration on the humblest lay.

William Wordsworth [1770-1850]

ON AN OLD SONG

LITTLE snatch of ancient song,
What has made thee live so long?
Flying on thy wings of rhyme
Lightly down the depths of time,
Telling nothing strange or rare,
Scarce a thought or image there,
Nothing but the old, old tale
Of a hapless lover's wail;
Offspring of an idle hour,
Whence has come thy lasting power?
By what turn of rhythm or phrase,
By what subtle careless grace,
Can thy music charm our ears
After full three hundred years?

Landmarks of the human mind
One by one are left behind,
And a subtle change is wrought
In the mould and cast of thought;
Modes of reasoning pass away,
Types of beauty lose their sway;
Creeds and causes that have made
Many noble lives must fade,
And the words that thrilled of old
Now seem hueless, dead, and cold;
Fancy's rainbow tints are flying,
Thoughts, like men, are slowly dying;
All things perish, and the strongest
Often do not last the longest;
The stately ship is seen no more,
The fragile skiff attains the shore;
And while the great and wise decay,
And all their trophies pass away,
Some sudden thought, some careless rhyme,
Still floats above the wrecks of Time.

William Edward Hartpole Lecky [1838-1903]

TO SONG

HERE shall remain all tears for lovely things
And here enshrined the longing of great hearts,
Caught on a lyre whence waking wonder starts,
To mount afar upon immortal wings;
Here shall be treasured tender wonderings,
The faintest whisper that the soul imparts,
All silent secrets and all gracious arts,
Where nature murmurs of her hidden springs.

O magic of a song! here loveliness
May sleep unhindered of life's mortal toll,
And noble things stand towering o'er the tide;
Here mid the years, untouched by time or stress,
Shall sweep on every wind that stirs the soul
The music of a voice that never died!

Thomas S. Jones, Jr. [1882-]

VERSE

PAST ruined Ilion Helen lives,
 Alcestis rises from the shades;
 Verse calls them forth; 'tis verse that gives
 Immortal youth to mortal maids.

Soon shall Oblivion's deepening veil
 Hide all the peopled hills you see,
 The gay, the proud, while lovers hail
 These many summers you and me.

Walter Savage Landor [1775-1864]

AN OLD-FASHIONED POET

IN simpler verse than triolets,
 Rondeau, or deft quatrain,
 With breath of morning violets
 In every dewy strain,
 He sang from overflowing heart
 His sweet old songs unspoiled by art.

Progressive years have passed since then—
 The Muse has changed her ways;
 No more through flowery mead and glen
 A rustic maid she strays;
 Amid the traffic of the town
 We catch the flutter of her gown.

But one who knows her virgin grace
 Gives back the songs she sung
 And brings with glimpses of her face
 The days when love was young.

O Muse immortal, singer true,
 What harmonies unite the two!

Ada Foster Murray [18 -

POET AND LARK

WHEN leaves turn outward to the light,
 And all the roads are fringed with green,
 When larks are pouring, high, unseen,
 The joy they find in song and flight,

“Qui Sait Aimer, Sait Mourir” 2909

Then I, too, with the lark would wing
My little flight, and, soaring, sing

When larks drop downward to the nest,
And day drops downward to the sea,
And song and wing are fain to rest,
The lark's dear wisdom guideth me,
And I too turn within my door,
Content to dream, and sing no more.

Mary Ainge de Vere [1844-

AMID CHANGE, UNCHANGING

THE Poet singeth like the bird that sitteth by the rose,
While dews are chill, and on the hill the first faint sunbeam
glows;

While through the buds' thick-folded green the first red-
rose streak shows,

Sing, Poet, sing of Hope and Spring,
Still sing beside thy rose!

The Poet singeth like the bird that sitteth by the rose,
While on the golden summer noon her golden heart o'er-
flows;

And now she waxeth red, now pale, yet ever is the rose,
Sing, Poet, sooth of Love and Youth,
Still sing beside thy rose!

The Poet singeth like the bird that sitteth by the rose,
When from the drooping stalk her brief sweet glory earth-
ward goes,

And the red is kindling on the leaf that fadeth from the rose,
Sing, Poet, sing, remembering,
Still sing beside thy rose!

Dora Greenwell [1821-1882]

“QUI SAIT AIMER, SAIT MOURIR”

“I BURN my soul away!”

So spake the Rose, and smiled; “within my cup
All day the sunbeams fall in flame, all day
They drink my sweetness up!”

2910 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

"I sigh my soul away!"

The Lily said; "all night the moonbeams pale
Steal round and round me, whispering in their play
An all too tender tale!"

"I give my soul away!"

The Violet said; "the West wind wanders on,
The North wind comes; I know not what they say,
And yet my soul is gone!"

Oh, Poet, burn away

Thy fervent soul! fond Lover at the feet
Of her thou lovest, sigh! dear Christian, pray,
And let the world be sweet!

Dora Greenwell [1821-1882]

TO THE POETS

BARDS of Passion and of Mirth,
Ye have left your souls on earth!
Have ye souls in heaven too,
Double-lived in regions new?
Yes, and those of heaven commune
With the spheres of sun and moon;
With the noise of fountains wondrous
And the parle of voices thund'rous;
With the whisper of heaven's trees
And one another, in soft ease
Seated on Elysian lawns,
Browsed by none but Dian's fawns;
Underneath large blue-bells tented,
Where the daisies are rose-scented,
And the rose herself has got
Perfume which on earth is not,
Where the nightingale doth sing,
Not a senseless, trancèd thing,
But divine, melodious truth,
Philosophic numbers smooth;
Tales and golden histories
Of heaven and its mysteries.

Thus ye live on high, and then
On the earth ye live again;
And the souls ye left behind you
Teach us, here, the way to find you,
Where your other souls are joying,
Never slumbered, never cloying.
Here, your earth-born souls still speak
To mortals, of their little week;
Of their sorrows and delights;
Of their passions and their spites;
Of their glory and their shame;
What doth strengthen and what maim.
Thus ye teach us, every day,
Wisdom, though fled far away.

Bards of Passion and of Mirth,
Ye have left your souls on earth!
Ye have souls in heaven too,
Double-lived in regions new!

John Keats [1795-1821]

THE PROGRESS OF POESY

A PINDARIC ODE

AWAKE, Æolian lyre, awake,
And give to rapture all thy trembling strings.
From Helicon's harmonious springs
A thousand rills their mazy progress take:
The laughing flowers, that round them blow,)
Drink life and fragrance as they flow.
Now the rich stream of music winds along
Deep, majestic, smooth and strong,
Through verdant vales, and Ceres' golden reign:
Now rolling down the steep amain,
Headlong, impetuous, see it pour;
The rocks and nodding groves rebellow to the roar.

O Sovereign of the willing soul,
Parent of sweet and solemn-breathing airs,
Enchanting shell! the sullen Cares
And frantic Passions hear thy soft control.

2912 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

On Thracia's hills the Lord of War
 Has curbed the fury of his car,
 And dropped his thirsty lance at thy command.
 Perching on the sceptered hand
 Of Jove, thy magic lulls the feathered king
 With ruffled plumes and flagging wing:
 Quenched in dark clouds of slumber lie
 The terror of his beak, and lightnings of his eye.

Thee the voice, the dance, obey,
 Tempered to thy warbled lay.
 O'er Idalia's velvet-green
 The rosy-crownèd Loves are seen
 On Cytherea's day,
 With antic Sports, and blue-eyed Pleasures,
 Frisking light in frolic measures;
 Now pursuing, now retreating,
 Now in circling troops they meet:
 To brisk notes in cadence beating,
 Glance their many-twinkling feet.
 Slow melting strains their Queen's approach declare:
 Where'er she turns, the Graces homage pay.
 With arms sublime, that float upon the air,
 In gliding state she wins her easy way:
 O'er her warm cheek and rising bosom move
 The bloom of young Desire and purple light of Love.

Man's feeble race what ills await!
 Labor, and Penury, the racks of Pain,
 Disease, and Sorrow's weeping train,
 And Death, sad refuge from the storms of fate!
 The fond complaint, my song, disprove,
 And justify the laws of Jove.
 Say, has he given in vain the heavenly Muse?
 Night, and all her sickly dews,
 Her specters wan, and birds of boding cry,
 He gives to range the dreary sky:
 Till down the eastern cliffs afar
 Hyperion's march they spy, and glittering shafts of
 war.

In climes beyond the solar road,
Where shaggy forms o'er ice-built mountains roam,
The Muse has broke the twilight gloom
To cheer the shivering native's dull abode.
And oft, beneath the odorous shade
Of Chili's boundless forests laid,
She deigns to hear the savage youth repeat
In loose numbers wildly sweet
Their feather-cinctured chiefs, and dusky loves.
Her track, where'er the Goddess roves,
Glory pursue and generous Shame,
The unconquerable Mind, and Freedom's holy flame.

Woods, that wave o'er Delphi's steep,
Isles, that crown the Ægean deep,
Fields, that cool Ilissus laves,
Or where Mæander's amber waves
In lingering labyrinths creep,
How do your tuneful echoes languish,
Mute, but to the voice of anguish?
Where each old poetic mountain
Inspiration breathed around:
Every shade and hallowed fountain
Murmured deep a solemn sound:
Till the sad Nine, in Greece's evil hour,
Left their Parnassus for the Latian plains.
Alike they scorn the pomp of tyrant Power,
And coward Vice, that revels in her chains.
When Latium had her lofty spirit lost,
They sought, O Albion! next thy sea-encircled coast.

Far from the sun and summer gale,
In thy green lap was Nature's darling laid,
What time, where lucid Avon strayed,
To him the mighty mother did unveil
Her awful face: the dauntless child
Stretched forth his little arms, and smiled.
This pencil take (she said), whose colors clear
Richly paint the vernal year:
Thine too these golden keys, immortal boy!
This can unlock the gates of joy;

2914 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

Of horror that, and thrilling fears,
Or ope the sacred source of sympathetic tears.

Nor second he, that rode sublime
Upon the seraph-wings of Ecstasy,
The secrets of the abyss to spy.

He passed the flaming bounds of place and time:
The living Throne, the sapphire-blaze,
Where Angels tremble while they gaze,
He saw; but, blasted with excess of light,
Closed his eyes in endless night.
Behold, where Dryden's less presumptuous car,
Wide o'er the fields of glory bear
Two coursers of ethereal race,
With necks in thunder clothed, and long-resounding pace.

Hark, his hands the lyre explore!
Bright-eyed Fancy, hovering o'er,
Scatters from her pictured urn
Thoughts that breathe, and words that burn.
But ah, 'tis heard no more!

O Lyre divine! what daring Spirit
Wakes thee now? Though he inherit
Nor the pride, nor ample pinion,
That the Theban Eagle bear,
Sailing with supreme dominion
Through the azure deep of air:
Yet oft before his infant eyes would run
Such forms as glitter in the Muse's ray,
With orient hues, unborrowed of the Sun:
Yet shall he mount, and keep his distant way
Beyond the limits of a vulgar fate,
Beneath the Good how far—but far above the Great.

Thomas Gray [1716-1771]

SEAWEED

WHEN descends on the Atlantic
The gigantic
Storm-wind of the equinox,

Landward in his wrath he scourges
The toiling surges,
Laden with seaweed from the rocks:

From Bermuda's reefs; from edges
Of sunken ledges,
In some far-off, bright Azore;
From Bahama, and the dashing,
Silver-flashing
Surges of San Salvador;

From the tumbling surf, that buries
The Orkneyan skerries,
Answering the hoarse Hebrides;
And from wrecks of ships, and drifting
Spars, uplifting
On the desolate, rainy seas,—

Ever drifting, drifting, drifting
On the shifting
Currents of the restless main;
Till in sheltered coves, and reaches
Of sandy beaches,
All have found repose again.

So when storms of wild emotion
Strike the ocean
Of the poet's soul, ere long,
From each cave and rocky fastness
In its vastness,
Floats some fragment of a song:

From the far-off isles enchanted
Heaven has planted
With the golden fruit of Truth;
From the flashing surf, whose vision
Gleams Elysian
In the tropic clime of Youth;

From the strong Will, and the Endeavor
That for ever
Wrestles with the tides of Fate;

2916 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

From the wreck of Hopes far-scattered,
 Tempest-shattered,
Floating waste and desolate;—
Ever drifting, drifting, drifting
 On the shifting
Currents of the restless heart;
Till at length in books recorded,
 They, like hoarded
Household words, no more depart.
 Henry Wadsworth Longfellow [1807-1882]

TO THE MUSES

WHETHER on Ida's shady brow,
 Or in the chambers of the East,
The chambers of the Sun, that now
 From ancient melody have ceased;

Whether in heaven ye wander fair,
 Or the green corners of the earth,
Or the blue regions of the air
 Where the melodious winds have birth;

Whether on crystal rocks ye rove,
 Beneath the bosom of the sea,
Wandering in many a coral grove;
 Fair Nine, forsaking Poetry;

How have you left the ancient love
 That bards of old enjoyed in you!
The languid strings do scarcely move,
 The sound is forced, the notes are few.
 William Blake [1757-1827]

"WHITHER IS GONE THE WISDOM AND THE POWER"

WHITHER is gone the wisdom and the power
That ancient sages scattered with the notes
Of thought-suggesting lyres? The music floats
In the void air; e'en at this breathing hour,

In every cell and every blooming bower
The sweetness of old lays is hovering still:
But the strong soul, the self-constraining will,
The rugged root which bare the winsome flower
Is weak and withered. Were we like the fays
That sweetly nestle in the fox-glove bells,
Or lurk and murmur in the rose-lipped shells
Which Neptune to the earth for quit-rent pays,
Then might our pretty modern Philomels
Sustain our spirits with their roundelays.

Hartley Coleridge [1796-1849]

THE MUSES

Of old the Muses sat on high,
And heard and judged the songs of men;
On one they smiled, who loitered by;
Of toiling ten, they slighted ten.

"They lightly serve who serve us best,
Nor know they how the task was done;
We Muses love a soul at rest,
But violence and toil we shun."

If men say true, the Muses now
Have changed their ancient habitude,
And would be served with knitted brow,
And stress and toil each day renewed.

So each one with the other vies,
Of those who weave romance or song:
"On us, O Muse, bestow thy prize,
For we have striven well and long!"

And yet methinks I hear the hest
Come murmuring down from Helicon:
"They lightly serve who serve us best,
Nor know they how the task was done!"

Edith M. Thomas [1854-

THE MOODS

(AFTER READING CERTAIN OF THE IRISH POETS)

THE Moods have laid their hands across my hair:
 The Moods have drawn their fingers through my heart;
 My hair shall nevermore lie smooth and bright,
 But stir like tide-worn sea-weed, and my heart
 Shall nevermore be glad of small, sweet things,—
 A wild rose, or a crescent moon,—a book
 Of little verses, or a dancing child.
 My heart turns crying from the rose and brook,
 My heart turns crying from the thin bright moon,
 And weeps with useless sorrow for the child.
 The Moods have loosed a wind to vex my hair,
 And made my heart too wise, that was a child.

Now I shall blow like smitten candle-flame;
 I shall desire all things that may not be:
 The years, the stars, the souls of ancient men,
 All tears that must, and smiles that may not be,—
 Yes, glimmering lights across a windy ford,
 Yes, vagrant voices on a darkened plain,
 And holy things, and outcast things, and things
 Far too remote, frail-bodied, to be plain.

My pity and my joy are grown alike;
 I cannot sweep the strangeness from my heart.
 The Moods have laid swift hands across my hair:
 The Moods have drawn swift fingers through my heart.

Fannie Stearns Davis [18 —

THE PASSIONATE READER TO HIS POET

DOTH it not thrill thee, Poet,
 Dead and dust though thou art,
 To feel how I press thy singing
 Close to my heart?

The Flight of the Goddess 2919

Take it at night to my pillow,
Kiss it before I sleep,
And again when the delicate morning
Beginneth to peep?

See how I bathe thy pages
Here in the light of the sun;
Through thy leaves, as a wind among roses,
The breezes shall run.

Feel how I take thy poem
And bury within it my face,
As I pressed it last night in the heart of a flower,
Or deep in a dearer place.

Think, as I love thee, Poet,
A thousand love beside,
Dear women love to press thee too
Against a sweeter side.

Art thou not happy, Poet?
I sometimes dream that I
For such a fragrant fame as thine
Would gladly sing and die.

Say, wilt thou change thy glory
For this same youth of mine?
And I will give my days i' the sun
For that great song of thine.

Richard Le Gallienne [1366-

THE FLIGHT OF THE GODDESS

A MAN should live in a garret aloof,
And have few friends, and go poorly clad,
With an old hat stopping the chink in the roof,
To keep the Goddess constant and glad.

Of old, when I walked on a rugged way,
And gave much work for but little bread,
The Goddess dwelt with me night and day,
Sat at my table, haunted my bed.

2920 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

The narrow, mean attic, I see it now!—
Its window o'erlooking the city's tiles,
The sunset's fires, and the clouds of snow,
And the river wandering miles and miles.

Just one picture hung in the room,
The saddest story that Art can tell—
Dante and Virgil in lurid gloom
Watching the Lovers float through Hell.

Wretched enough was I sometimes,
Pinched, and harassed with vain desires;
But thicker than clover sprung the rhymes
As I dwelt like a sparrow among the spires.

Midnight filled my slumbers with song;
Music haunted my dreams by day.
Now I listen and wait and long,
But the Delphian airs have died away.

I wonder and wonder how it befell:
Suddenly I had friends in crowds;
I bade the house-tops a long farewell;
“Good-by,” I cried, “to the stars and clouds!

“But thou, rare soul, thou hast dwelt with me,
Spirit of Poesy! thou divine
Breath of the morning, thou shalt be,
Goddess! for ever and ever mine.”

And the woman I loved was now my bride,
And the house I wanted was my own;
I turned to the Goddess satisfied—
But the Goddess had somehow flown.

Flown, and I fear she will never return;
I am much too sleek and happy for her,
Whose lovers must hunger and waste and burn,
Ere the beautiful heathen heart will stir.

I call—but she does not stoop to my cry;
I wait—but she lingers, and ah! so long!
It was not so in the years gone by,
When she touched my lips with chrism of song.

I swear I will get me a garret again,
And adore, like a Parsee, the sunset's fires,
And lure the Goddess, by vigil and pain,
Up with the sparrows among the spires.

For a man should live in a garret aloof,
And have few friends, and go poorly clad,
With an old hat stopping the chink in the roof,
To keep the Goddess constant and glad.

Thomas Bailey Aldrich [1837-1907]

THE SOVEREIGNS

THEY who create rob death of half its stings;
Their life is given for the Muse's sake;
Of thought they build their palaces, and make
Enduring entities and beauteous things;
They are the Poets—they give airy wings
To shapes marmorean; or they overtake
The Ideal with the brush, or, soaring, wake
Far in the rolling clouds their glorious strings.
The Poet is the only potentate;
His sceptre reaches o'er remotest zones;
His thought remembered and his golden tones
Shall, in the ears of nations uncreate,
Roll on for ages and reverberate
When Kings are dust beside forgotten thrones.

Lloyd Mifflin [1846-

THE ARGUMENT OF HIS BOOK

I SING of brooks, of blossoms, birds, and bowers,
Of April, May, of June, and July flowers;
I sing of May-poles, hock-carts, wassails, wakes,
Of bridegrooms, brides, and of their bridal cakes.
I write of Youth, of Love, and have access
By these, to sing of cleanly wantonness;
I sing of dews, of rains, and, piece by piece,
Of balm, of oil, of spice, and ambergris.
I sing of times trans-shifting; and I write
How roses first came red, and lilies white;

2922 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

I write of groves, of twilights, and I sing
The court of Mab, and of the Fairy King.
I write of Hell; I sing, and ever shall,
Of Heaven, and hope to have it after all.

Robert Herrick [1591-1634]

ENVOY

Go, little book, and wish to all
Flowers in the garden, meat in the hall,
A bit of wine, a spice of wit,
A house with lawns enclosing it,
A living river by the door,
A nightingale in the sycamore!

Robert Louis Stevenson [1850-1894]

ENVOY

Go, songs, for ended is our brief, sweet play;
Go, children of swift joy and tardy sorrow:
And some are sung, and that was yesterday,
And some unsung, and that may be to-morrow.

Go forth; and if it be o'er stony way,
Old joy can lend what never grief must borrow:
And it was sweet, and that was yesterday,
And sweet is sweet, though purchasèd with sorrow.

Go, songs, and come not back from your far way:
And if men ask you why ye smile and sorrow,
Tell them ye grieve, for your hearts know To-day,
Tell them ye smile, for your eyes know To-morrow.

Francis Thompson [1859?-1907]

THE SONNET'S VOICE

A METRICAL LESSON BY THE SEASHORE

YON silvery billows breaking on the beach
Fall back in foam beneath the star-shine clear,
The while my rhymes are murmuring in your ear
A restless lore like that the billows teach;
For on these sonnet-waves my soul would reach

From its own depths, and rest within you, dear,
 As, through the billowy voices yearning here,
 Great nature strives to find a human speech.
 A sonnet is a wave of melody:
 From heaving waters of the impassioned soul
 A billow of tidal music one and whole
 Flows, in the "octave"; then, returning free,
 Its ebbing surges in the "sestet" roll
 Back to the deeps of Life's tumultuous sea.

Theodore Watts-Dunton [1836-1914]

THE SONNET

A SONNET is a moment's monument,—
 Memorial from the Soul's eternity
 To one dead deathless hour. Look that it be,
 Whether for lustral rite or dire portent,
 Of its own arduous fulness reverent:
 Carve it in ivory or in ebony,
 As Day or Night may rule; and let Time see
 Its flowering crest impearled and orient.
 A Sonnet is a coin: its face reveals
 The soul,—its converse, to what Power 'tis due:—
 Whether for tribute to the august appeals
 Of Life, or dower in Love's high retinue,
 It serve; or, 'mid the dark wharf's cavernous breath,
 In Charon's palm it pay the toll to Death.

Dante Gabriel Rossetti [1828-1882]

THE SONNET

WHAT is a sonnet? 'Tis the pearly shell
 That murmurs of the far-off murmuring sea;
 A precious jewel carved most curiously;
 It is a little picture painted well.
 What is a sonnet? 'Tis the tear that fell
 From a great poet's hidden ecstasy;
 A two-edged sword, a star, a song,—ah me!
 Sometimes a heavy-tolling funeral bell.
 This was the flame that shook with Dante's breath,
 The solemn organ whereon Milton played,

2924 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

And the clear glass where Shakespeare's shadow falls;
A sea this is,—beware who ventureth!
For like a fiord the narrow floor is laid
Mid-ocean deep sheer to the mountain walls.

Richard Watson Gilder [1844-1909]

THE SONNET

I

THE Sonnet is a fruit which long hath slept
And ripened on life's sun-warmed orchard-wall;
A gem which, hardening in the mystical
Mine of man's heart, to quenchless flame hath leapt;
A medal of pure gold art's nympholept
Stamps with love's lips and brows imperial;
A branch from memory's briar, whereon the fall
Of thought-eternalizing tears hath wept:
A star that shoots athwart star-steadfast heaven;
A fluttering aigrette of tossed passion's brine;
A leaf from youth's immortal missal torn;
A bark across dark seas of anguish driven;
A feather dropped from breast-wings aquiline;
A silvery dream shunning red lips of morn.

II

There is no mood, no heart-throb fugitive,
No spark from man's imperishable mind,
No moment of man's will, that may not find
Form in the Sonnet; and thenceforward live
A potent elf, by art's imperative
Magic to crystal spheres of song confined:
As in the moonstone's orb pent spirits wind
'Mid dungeon depths day-beams they take and give.
Spare thou no pains; carve thought's pure diamond
With fourteen facets, scattering fire and light:—
Uncut, what jewel burns but darkly bright?
And Prospero vainly waves his runic wand,
If, spurning art's inexorable law,
In Ariel's prison-sphere he leave one flaw.

III

The Sonnet is a world, where feelings caught
 In webs of phantasy, combine and fuse
 Their kindred elements 'neath mystic dews
 Shed from the ether round man's dwelling wrought;
 Distilling heart's content, star-fragrance fraught
 With influences from the breathing fires
 Of heaven in everlasting endless gyres
 Enfolding and encircling orbs of thought.
 Our Sonnet's world hath two fixed hemispheres:
 This, where the sun with fierce strength masculine
 Pours his keen rays and bids the noonday shine;
 That, where the moon and the stars, concordant powers,
 Shed milder rays, and daylight disappears
 In low melodious music of still hours.

John Addington Symonds [1840-1893]

THE RONDEAU

You bid me try, Blue Eyes, to write
 A Rondeau. What! Forthwith?—To-night?
 Reflect. Some skill I have, 'tis true;
 But thirteen lines!—and rhymed on two!—
 "Refrain," as well. Ah, hapless plight!
 Still, there are five lines—ranged aright.
 These Gallic bonds, I feared, would fright
 My easy Muse. They did, till you—
 You bid me try!

That makes them eight.—The port's in sight:
 'Tis all because your eyes are bright!
 Now just a pair to end in "oo,"—
 When maids command, what can't we do!
 Behold! The Rondeau, tasteful, light,
 You bid me try!

After the French of Voiture by Austin Dobson [1840-

METRICAL FEET

LESSON FOR A BOY

TROCHEE trips from long to short;
 From long to long in solemn sort

2926 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

Slow Spondee stalks; strong foot! yet ill able
Ever to come up with dactyl trisyllable.
Iambics march from short to long;—
With a leap and a bound the swift Anapæsts throng;
One syllable long, with one short at each side,
Amphibrachys hastes with a stately stride;—
First and last being long, middle short, Amphimacer
Strikes his thundering hoofs like a proud highbred racer.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge [1772-1834]

ACCIDENT IN ART

WHAT painter has not with a careless smutch
Accomplished his despair?—one touch revealing
All he had put of life, thought, vigor, feeling,
Into the canvas that without that touch
Showed of his love and labor just so much
Raw pigment, scarce a scrap of soul concealing!
What poet has not found his spirit kneeling
A-sudden at the sound of such or such
Strange verses staring from his manuscript,
Written he knows not how, but which will sound
Like trumpets down the years? So Accident
Itself unmasks the likeness of Intent,
And even in blind Chance's darkest crypt
The shrine-lamp of God's purposing is found.

Richard Hovey [1864-1900]

A SONG FOR ST. CECILIA'S DAY, 1687

FROM harmony, from heavenly harmony,
This universal frame began:
When nature underneath a heap
Of jarring atoms lay,
And could not heave her head,
The tuneful voice was heard from high,
"Arise, ye more than dead!"
Then cold, and hot, and moist, and dry,
In order to their stations leap,
And Music's power obey.

A Song for St. Cecilia's Day, 1687 2927

From harmony, from heavenly harmony,
 This universal frame began:
 From harmony to harmony
Through all the compass of the notes it ran,
The diapason closing full in Man.

What passion cannot Music raise and quell?
 When Jubal struck the chorded shell,
 His listening brethren stood around,
 And, wondering, on their faces fell
 To worship that celestial sound:
Less than a God they thought there could not dwell
 Within the hollow of that shell
 That spoke so sweetly and so well.
What passion cannot Music raise and quell?

 The trumpet's loud clangor
 Excites us to arms,
 With shrill notes of anger,
 And mortal alarms.
The double double double beat
 Of the thundering drum
 Cries Hark! the foes come;
Charge, charge, 'tis too late to retreat!

 The soft complaining flute,
 In dying notes, discovers
 The woes of hopeless lovers,
Whose dirge is whispered by the warbling lute.

 Sharp violins proclaim
 Their jealous pangs and desperation,
 Fury, frantic indignation,
Depth of pains, and height of passion,
 For the fair, disdainful dame.

 But O, what art can teach,
 What human voice can reach,
 The sacred organ's praise?

2928 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

Notes inspiring holy love,
Notes that wing their heavenly ways
To mend the choirs above.

Orpheus could lead the savage race;
And trees uprooted left their place,
Sequacious of the lyre;
But bright Cecilia raised the wonder higher:
When to her organ vocal breath was given,
An angel heard, and straight appeared
Mistaking Earth for Heaven.

GRAND CHORUS

As from the power of sacred lays
The spheres began to move,
And sung the great Creator's praise
To all the Blest above;
So when the last and dreadful hour
This crumbling pageant shall devour,
The trumpet shall be heard on high,
The dead shall live, the living die,
And Music shall untune the sky!

John Dryden [1631-1700]

ALEXANDER'S FEAST, OR, THE POWER OF MUSIC; AN ODE IN HONOR OF ST. CECILIA'S DAY, 1697

I

'Twas at the royal feast for Persia won
By Philip's warlike son—
Aloft in awful state
The godlike hero sate
On his imperial throne;
His valiant peers were placed around,
Their brows with roses and with myrtles bound,
(So should desert in arms be crowned);
The lovely Thais by his side
Sate like a blooming Eastern bride
In flower of youth and beauty's pride:—

Happy, happy, happy pair!
None but the brave
None but the brave
None but the brave deserves the fair!

CHORUS—*Happy, happy, happy pair!*
None but the brave
None but the brave
None but the brave deserves the fair!

II

Timotheus, placed on high
Amid the tuneful choir,
With flying fingers touched the lyre:
The trembling notes ascend the sky
And heavenly joys inspire.
The song began from Jove
Who left his blissful seats above—
Such is the power of mighty love!
A dragon's fiery form belied the god;
Sublime on radiant spires he rode
When he to fair Olympia pressed,
And while he sought her snowy breast,
Then round her slender waist he curled,
And stamped an image of himself, a sovereign of the
world.
—The listening crowd admire the lofty sound!
A present deity! they shout around:
A present deity! the vaulted roofs rebound:
With ravished ears
The monarch hears,
Assumes the god,
Affects to nod
And seems to shake the spheres.

CHORUS—*With ravished ears*
The monarch hears,
Assumes the god,
Affects to nod
And seems to shake the spheres.

2930 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

III

The praise of Bacchus then the sweet musician sung,
Of Bacchus ever fair and ever young:
The jolly god in triumph comes!
Sound the trumpets, beat the drums!
Flushed with a purple grace
He shows his honest face:
Now give the hautboys breath; he comes, he comes!
Bacchus, ever fair and young,
Drinking joys did first ordain;
Bacchus' blessings are a treasure,
Drinking is the soldier's pleasure:
Rich the treasure,
Sweet the pleasure,
Sweet is pleasure after pain.

CHORUS—*Bacchus' blessings are a treasure,
Drinking is the soldier's pleasure:
Rich the treasure,
Sweet the pleasure,
Sweet is pleasure after pain.*

IV

Soothed with the sound, the king grew vain;
Fought all his battles o'er again,
And thrice he routed all his foes, and thrice he slew the slain!
The master saw the madness rise,
His glowing cheeks, his ardent eyes;
And, while he Heaven and Earth defied,
Changed his hand and checked his pride.
He chose a mournful Muse
Soft pity to infuse:
He sung Darius great and good,
By too severe a fate
Fallen, fallen, fallen, fallen,
Fallen from his high estate,
And weltering in his blood;
Deserted at his utmost need
By those his former bounty fed;

On the bare earth exposed he lies
With not a friend to close his eyes.
—With downcast looks the joyless victor sate,
Revolving, in his altered soul,
The various turns of Chance below;
And, now and then, a sigh he stole,
And tears began to flow.

CHORUS—*Revolving, in his altered soul,
The various turns of Chance below;
And, now and then, a sigh he stole,
And tears began to flow.*

V

The mighty master smiled to see
That love was in the next degree;
'Twas but a kindred-sound to move,
For pity melts the mind to love.
Softly sweet, in Lydian measures
Soon he soothed his soul to pleasures.
War, he sung, is toil and trouble,
Honor but an empty bubble;
Never ending, still beginning,
Fighting still, and still destroying;
If the world be worth thy winning,
Think, O think it worth enjoying:
Lovely 'Thais sits beside thee,
Take the good the gods provide thee!
—The many rend the skies with loud applause;
So Love was crowned, but Music won the cause.
The prince, unable to conceal his pain,
Gazed on the fair
Who caused his care,
And sighed and looked, sighed and looked,
Sighed and looked, and sighed again:
At length, with love and wine at once oppressed,
The vanquished victor sunk upon her breast.

CHORUS—*The prince, unable to conceal his pain,
Gazed on the fair
Who caused his care,*

2932 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

*And sighed and looked, sighed and looked,
Sighed and looked, and sighed again:
At length, with love and wine at once oppressed,
The vanquished victor sunk upon her breast.*

VI

Now strike the golden lyre again:
A louder yet, and yet a louder strain!
Break his bands of sleep asunder
And rouse him, like a rattling peal of thunder.
Hark, hark! the horrid sound
Has raised up his head:
As awaked from the dead,
And amazed he stares around.
Revenge, revenge, Timotheus cries,
See the Furies arise!
See the snakes that they rear
How they hiss in their hair,
And the sparkles that flash from their eyes!
Behold a ghastly band,
Each a torch in his hand!
Those are Grecian ghosts, that in battle were slain
And unburied remain
Inglorious on the plain:
Give the vengeance due
To the valiant crew!
Behold how they toss their torches on high,
How they point to the Persian abodes
And glittering temples of their hostile gods.
—The princes applaud with a furious joy:
And the King seized a flambeau with zeal to destroy;
Thais led the way
To light him to his prey,
And, like another Helen, fired another Troy!

CHORUS—*And the King seized a flambeau with zeal to de-
stroy;
Thais led the way
To light him to his prey,
And, like another Helen, fired another Troy!*

VII

—Thus, long ago,
 Ere heaving bellows learned to blow,
 While organs yet were mute,
 Timotheus, to his breathing flute
 And sounding lyre,
 Could swell the soul to rage, or kindle soft desire.
 At last divine Cecilia came,
 Inventress of the vocal frame;
 The sweet enthusiast from her sacred store
 Enlarged the former narrow bounds,
 And added length to solemn sounds,
 With Nature's mother-wit, and arts unknown before.
 —Let old Timotheus yield the prize
 Or both divide the crown;
 He raised a mortal to the skies;
 She drew an angel down!

GRAND CHORUS—*At last divine Cecilia came,
 Inventress of the vocal frame;
 The sweet enthusiast from her sacred store
 Enlarged the former narrow bounds,
 And added length to solemn sounds,
 With Nature's mother-wit, and arts un-
 known before.
 —Let old Timotheus yield the prize
 Or both divide the crown;
 He raised a mortal to the skies;
 She drew an angel down!*

John Dryden [1631-1700]

THE PASSIONS

AN ODE FOR MUSIC

WHEN Music, heavenly maid, was young,
 While yet in early Greece she sung,
 The Passions oft, to hear her shell,
 Thronged around her magic cell,

2934 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

Exulting, trembling, raging, fainting,
Possessed beyond the Muse's painting;
By turns they felt the glowing mind
Disturbed, delighted, raised, refined:
Till once, 'tis said, when all were fired,
Filled with fury, rapt, inspired,
From the supporting myrtles round
They snatched her instruments of sound;
And, as they oft had heard apart
Sweet lessons of her forceful art,
Each (for madness ruled the hour),
Would prove his own expressive power.

First Fear his hand, its skill to try,
Amid the chords bewildered laid,
And back recoiled, he knew not why,
Even at the sound himself had made.

Next Anger rushed; his eyes, on fire,
In lightnings owned his secret stings;
In one rude clash he struck the lyre,
And swept with hurried hand the strings.

With woful measures wan Despair
Low, sullen sounds his grief beguiled;
A solemn, strange, and mingled air;
'Twas sad by fits, by starts 'twas wild.

But thou, O Hope, with eyes so fair,
What was thy delightful measure?
Still it whispered promised pleasure,
And bade the lovely scenes at distance hail!
Still would her touch the strain prolong,
And from the rocks, the woods, the vale,
She called on Echo still, through all the song;
And, where her sweetest theme she chose,
A soft responsive voice was heard at every close,
And Hope enchanted smiled, and waved her golden hair.

And longer had she sung,—but, with a frown,
Revenge impatient rose;
He threw his blood-stained sword in thunder down
And, with a withering look,
The war-denouncing trumpet took,
And blew a blast so loud and dread,
Were ne'er prophetic sounds so full of woe.
And ever and anon he beat
The doubling drum with furious heat;
And though sometimes, each dreary pause between,
Dejected Pity, at his side,
Her soul-subduing voice applied,
Yet still he kept his wild unaltered mien,
While each strained ball of sight seemed bursting from his
head.

Thy numbers, Jealousy, to naught were fixed,
Sad proof of thy distressful state;
Of differing themes the veering song was mixed,
And now it courted Love, now raving called on Hate.

With eyes upraised, as one inspired,
Pale Melancholy sate retired,
And from her wild sequestered seat,
In notes by distance made more sweet,
Poured through the mellow horn her pensive soul:
And, dashing soft from rocks around,
Bubbling runnels joined the sound;
Through glades and glooms the mingled measure stole;
Or, o'er some haunted stream, with fond delay,
Round an holy calm diffusing,
Love of Peace and lonely musing,
In hollow murmurs died away.

But oh, how altered was its sprightlier tone,
When Cheerfulness, a nymph of healthiest hue,
Her bow across her shoulder flung,
Her buskins gemmed with morning dew,
Blew an inspiring air, that dale and thicket rung,
The hunter's call to faun and dryad known!

2936 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

The oak-crowned sisters, and their chaste-eyed queen,
 Satyrs, and sylvan boys, were seen,
 Peeping from forth their alleys green;
 Brown Exercise rejoiced to hear,
 And Sport leapt up, and seized his beechen spear.

Last came Joy's ecstatic trial.
 He, with viny crown advancing,
 First to the lively pipe his hand addressed;
 But soon he saw the brisk awakening viol,
 Whose sweet entrancing voice he loved the best.
 They would have thought, who heard the strain,
 They saw in Tempe's vale her native maids
 Amidst the vestal sounding shades,
 To some unwearied minstrel dancing,
 While, as his flying fingers kissed the strings,
 Love framed with Mirth a gay fantastic round;
 Loose were her tresses seen, her zone unbound,
 And he, amidst his frolic play,
 As if he would the charming air repay,
 Shook thousand odors from his dewy wings.

O Music! sphere-descended maid,
 Friend of Pleasure, Wisdom's aid!
 Why, goddess, why, to us denied,
 Lay'st thou thy ancient lyre aside?
 As, in that loved Athenian bower,
 You learned an all-commanding power,
 Thy mimic soul, O Nymph endeared,
 Can well recall what then it heard.
 Where is thy native simple heart,
 Devote to Virtue, Fancy, Art?
 Arise, as in that elder time,
 Warm, energetic, chaste, sublime!
 Thy wonders, in that godlike age,
 Fill thy recording sister's page.—
 'Tis said, and I believe the tale,
 Thy humblest reed could more prevail,
 Had more of strength, diviner rage,
 Than all which charms this laggard age;

To Music, To Becalm His Fever 2937

Even all at once together found,
Cecilia's mingled world of sound.
O bid our vain endeavors cease,
Revive the just designs of Greece:
Return in all thy simple state!
Confirm the tales her sons relate!

William Collins [1721-1759]

TO MUSIC, TO BECALM HIS FEVER

CHARM me asleep, and melt me so
With thy delicious numbers,
That, being ravished, hence I go
Away in easy slumbers.
Ease my sick head,
And make my bed,
Thou power that canst sever
From me this ill,
And quickly still,
Though thou not kill
My fever.

Thou sweetly canst convert the same
From a consuming fire
Into a gentle-licking flame,
And make it thus expire.
Then make me weep
My pains asleep;
And give me such repose
That I, poor I,
May think thereby
I live and die
'Mongst roses.

Fall on me like a silent dew,
Or like those maiden showers
Which, by the peep of day, do strew
A baptism o'er the flowers.
Melt, melt my pains
With thy soft strains;

2938 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

That, having ease me given,
With full delight
I leave this light,
And take my flight
For Heaven.

Robert Herrick [1591-1674]

A MUSICAL INSTRUMENT

WHAT was he doing, the great god Pan,
Down in the reeds by the river?
Spreading ruin and scattering ban,
Splashing and paddling with hoofs of a goat,
And breaking the golden lilies afloat
With the dragon-fly on the river.

He tore out a reed, the great god Pan,
From the deep cool bed of the river:
The limpid water turbidly ran,
And the broken lilies a-dying lay,
And the dragon-fly had fled away,
Ere he brought it out of the river.

High on the shore sat the great god Pan,
While turbidly flowed the river;
And hacked and hewed as a great god can,
With his hard bleak steel at the patient reed,
Till there was not a sign of a leaf indeed
To prove it fresh from the river.

He cut it short, did the great god Pan,
(How tall it stood in the river!)
Then drew the pith, like the heart of a man,
Steadily from the outside ring,
And notched the poor dry empty thing
In holes, as he sat by the river.

"This is the way," laughed the great god Pan,
(Laughed while he sat by the river,)
"The only way, since gods began

To make sweet music, they could succeed.”
Then, dropping his mouth to a hole in the reed,
He blew in power by the river.

Sweet, sweet, sweet, O Pan!
Piercing sweet by the river!
Blinding sweet, O great god Pan!
The sun on the hill forgot to die,
And the lilies revived, and the dragon-fly
Came back to dream on the river.

Yet half a beast is the great god Pan,
To laugh as he sits by the river,
Making a poet out of a man:
The true gods sigh for the cost and pain,—
For the reed which grows nevermore again
As a reed with the reeds in the river.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning [1806-1861]

AT A SOLEMN MUSIC

BLEST pair of Sirens, pledges of Heaven's joy,
Sphere-born harmonious Sisters, Voice and Verse!
Wed your divine sounds, and mixed power employ,
Dead things with inbreathed sense able to pierce,
And to our high-raised phantasy present
That undisturbèd Song of pure consent
Aye sung before the sapphire-colored throne
To Him that sits thereon,
With saintly shout and solemn jubilee;
Where the bright Seraphim in burning row
Their loud uplifted angel-trumpets blow;
And the Cherubic host in thousand choirs
Touch their immortal harps of golden wires,
With those just Spirits that wear victorious palms,
Hymns devout and holy psalms
Singing everlastingly:
That we on earth, with undiscording voice
May rightly answer that melodious noise;
As once we did, till disproportioned sin
Jarred against nature's chime, and with harsh din

Broke the fair music that all creatures made
 To their great Lord, whose love their motion swayed
 In perfect diapason, whilst they stood
 In first obedience, and their state of good.
 O may we soon again renew that Song,
 And keep in tune with Heaven, till God ere long
 To his celestial concert us unite,
 To live with him, and sing in endless morn of light!

John Milton [1608-1674]

WITH A GUITAR, TO JANE

ARIEL to Miranda:—Take
 This slave of Music, for the sake
 Of him who is the slave of thee,
 And teach it all the harmony
 In which thou can'st, and only thou,
 Make the delighted spirit glow,
 Till joy denies itself again,
 And, too intense, is turned to pain;
 For by commission and command
 Of thine own Prince Ferdinand,
 Poor Ariel sends this silent token
 Of more than ever can be spoken;
 Your guardian spirit, Ariel, who,
 From life to life, must still pursue
 Your happiness;—for thus alone
 Can Ariel ever find his own.
 From Prospero's enchanted cell,
 As the mighty verses tell,
 To the throne of Naples, he
 Lit you o'er the trackless sea,
 Flitting on, your prow before,
 Like a living meteor.
 When you die, the silent Moon,
 In her interlunar swoon,
 Is not sadder in her cell
 Than deserted Ariel.
 When you live again on earth,
 Like an unseen star of birth,

Ariel guides you o'er the sea
Of life from your nativity.
Many changes have been run
Since Ferdinand and you begun
Your course of love, and Ariel still
Has tracked your steps and served your will.
Now, in humbler, happier lot,
This is all remembered not;
And now, alas! the poor sprite is
Imprisoned, for some fault of his,
In a body like a grave;—
From you he only dares to crave,
For his service and his sorrow,
A smile to-day, a song to-morrow.

The artist who this idol wrought
To echo all harmonious thought,
Felled a tree, while on the steep
The woods were in their winter sleep,
Rocked in that repose divine
On the wind-swept Apennine;
And dreaming, some of Autumn past,
And some of Spring approaching fast,
And some of April buds and showers,
And some of songs in July bowers,
And all of love; and so this tree—
Oh, that such our death may be!—
Died in sleep, and felt no pain,
To live in happier form again:
From which, beneath Heaven's fairest star,
The artist wrought the loved Guitar;
And taught it justly to reply
To all who question skilfully,
In language gentle as thine own;
Whispering in enamoured tone
Sweet oracles of woods and dells,
And summer winds in sylvan cells.
For it had learnt all harmonies
Of the plains and of the skies,

Of the forests and the mountains,
 And the many-voicèd fountains;
 The clearest echoes of the hills,
 The softest notes of falling rills,
 The melodies of birds and bees,
 The murmuring of summer seas,
 And pattering rain, and breathing dew,
 And airs of evening; and it knew
 That seldom-heard, mysterious sound
 Which, driven on its diurnal round,
 As it floats through boundless day,
 Our world enkindles on its way.—
 All this it knows; but will not tell
 To those who cannot question well
 The Spirit that inhabits it.
 It talks according to the wit
 Of its companions; and no more
 Is heard than has been felt before,
 By those who tempt it to betray
 These secrets of an elder day:
 But sweetly as its answers will
 Flatter hands of perfect skill,
 It keeps its highest, holiest tone
 For our belovèd Jane alone.

Percy Bysshe Shelley [1792-1822]

ODE

WE are the music-makers,
 And we are the dreamers of dreams,
 Wandering by lone sea-breakers,
 And sitting by desolate streams;
 World-losers and world-forsakers,
 On whom the pale moon gleams:
 Yet we are the movers and shakers
 Of the world for ever, it seems.

With wonderful deathless ditties
 We build up the world's great cities,

And out of a fabulous story
We fashion an empire's glory:
One man with a dream, at pleasure,
 Shall go forth and conquer a crown;
And three with a new song's measure
 Can trample an empire down.

We, in the ages lying
 In the buried past of the earth,
Built Nineveh with our sighing,
 And Babel itself with our mirth;
And o'erthrew them with prophesying
 To the old of the new world's worth;
For each age is a dream that is dying,
 Or one that is coming to birth.

A breath of our inspiration
Is the life of each generation;
 A wondrous thing of our dreaming
 Unearthly, impossible seeming—
The soldier, the king, and the peasant
 Are working together in one,
Till our dream shall become their present,
 And their work in the world be done.

They had no vision amazing
Of the goodly house they are raising;
 They had no divine foreshowing
 Of the land to which they are going:
But on one man's soul it hath broken,
 A light that doth not depart;
And his look, or a word he hath spoken,
 Wrought flame in another man's heart.

And therefore to-day is thrilling
With a past day's late fulfilling;
 And the multitudes are enlisted
 In the faith that their fathers resisted.

And, scorning the dream of tomorrow,
 And bringing to pass, as they may,
 In the world, for its joy or its sorrow,
 The dream that was scorned yesterday.

But we, with our dreaming and singing,
 Ceaseless and sorrowless we!
 The glory about us clinging
 Of the glorious futures we see,
 Our souls with high music ringing:
 O men! it must ever be
 That we dwell, in our dreaming and singing,
 A little apart from ye.

For we are afar with the dawning
 And the suns that are not yet high,
 And out of the infinite morning
 Intrepid you hear us cry—
 How, spite of your human scorning,
 Once more God's future draws nigh,
 And already goes forth the warning
 That ye of the past must die.

Great hail! we cry to the comers
 From the dazzling unknown shore;
 Bring us hither your sun and your summers,
 And renew our world as of yore;
 You shall teach us your song's new numbers,
 And things that we dreamed not before:
 Yea, in spite of a dreamer who slumbers.
 And a singer who sings no more.

Arthur O'Shaughnessy [1844-1881]

MUSIC

THE God of Music dwelleth out of doors.
 All seasons through his minstrelsy we meet,
 Breathing by field and covert haunting-sweet:
 From organ-lofts in forests old he pours
 A solemn harmony: on leafy floors

To smooth Autumnal pipes he moves his feet,
Or with the tingling plectrum of the sleet
In Winter keen beats out his thrilling scores.
Leave me the reed unplucked beside the stream,
And he will stoop and fill it with the breeze;
Leave me the viol's frame in secret trees,
Unwrought, and it shall make a druid theme;
Leave me the whispering shell on Nereid shores:
The God of Music dwelleth out of doors.

Edith M. Thomas [1854-

ON MUSIC

MANY love music but for music's sake,
Many because her touches can awake
Thoughts that repose within the breast half-dead,
And rise to follow where she loves to lead.
What various feelings come from days gone by!
What tears from far-off sources dim the eye!
Few, when light fingers with sweet voices play
And melodies swell, pause, and melt away,
Mind how at every touch, at every tone,
A spark of life hath glistened and hath gone.

Walter Savage Landor [1775-1864]

MUSIC AT TWILIGHT

O TWILIGHT, Twilight! evermore to hear
The wounded viols pleading to thy heart!
To dream we watch thy purple wings depart;
To wake, and know thy presence always near!
What dost thou on the pathway of the sun?
Abide thy sister Night, while grief so pure
Makes heaven and all its beauty seem too sure,
And all too certain her oblivion.

One star awakes to turn thee from the South.
Oh, linger in the shadows thou hast drawn,
Ere Night cast dew before the feet of Dawn,
Or Silence lay her kiss on Music's mouth!

George Sterling [1869-

THE KEY-BOARD

FIVE-AND-THIRTY black slaves,
 Half-a-hundred white,
 All their duty but to sing
 For their Queen's delight,
 Now with throats of thunder,
 Now with dulcet lips,
 While she rules them royally
 With her finger-tips!

When she quits her palace,
 All the slaves are dumb—
 Dumb with dolor till the Queen
 Back to Court is come:
 Dumb the throats of thunder,
 Dumb the dulcet lips,
 Lacking all the sovereignty
 Of her finger-tips.

Dusky slaves and pallid,
 Ebon slaves and white,
 When the Queen was on her throne
 How you sang to-night!
 Ah, the throats of thunder!
 Ah, the dulcet lips!
 Ah, the gracious tyrannies
 Of her finger-tips!

Silent, silent, silent,
 All your voices now;
 Was it then her life alone
 Did your life endow?
 Waken, throats of thunder!
 Waken, dulcet lips!
 Touched to immortality
 By her finger-tips.

William Watson [1858-

A TOCCATA OF GALUPPI'S

OH Galuppi, Baldassare, this is very sad to find!
 I can hardly misconceive you; it would prove me deaf and
 blind;
 But although I take your meaning, 'tis with such a heavy
 mind!

Here you come with your old music, and here's all the good
 it brings.

What, they lived once thus at Venice where the merchants
 were the kings,
 Where St. Mark's is, where the Doges used to wed the sea
 with rings?

Ay, because the sea's the street there; and 'tis arched by
 . . . what you call

. . . Shylock's bridge with houses on it, where they kept
 the carnival:

I was never out of England—it's as if I saw it all.

Did young people take their pleasure when the sea was
 warm in May?

Balls and masks begun at midnight, burning ever to mid-
 day,

When they made up fresh adventures for the morrow, do
 you say?

Was a lady such a lady, cheeks so round and lips so red,—
 On her neck the small face buoyant, like a bell-flower on its
 bed,

O'er the breast's superb abundance where a man might base
 his head?

Well, and it was graceful of them—they'd break talk off
 and afford

—She, to bite her mask's black velvet—he, to finger on his
 sword,

While you sat and played Toccatas, stately at the clavi-
 chord?

2948 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

What? Those lesser thirds so plaintive, sixths diminished,
sigh on sigh,
Told them something? Those suspensions, those solutions
—"Must we die?"
Those commiserating sevenths—"Life might last! we can
but try!"

"Were you happy?"—"Yes"—"And are you still as happy?"
—"Yes. And you?"
—"Then, more kisses!"—"Did *I* stop them, when a million
seemed so few?"
Hark! the dominant's persistence, till it must be answered
to!

So, an octave struck the answer. Oh, they praised you, I
dare say!
"Brave Galuppi! that was music! good alike at grave and
gay!
I can always leave off talking, when I hear a master play."

Then they left you for their pleasure: till in due time, one by
one,
Some with lives that came to nothing, some with deeds as
well undone,
Death came tacitly and took them where they never see
the sun.

But when I sit down to reason, think to take my stand nor
swerve,
While I triumph o'er a secret wrung from nature's close
reserve,
In you come with your cold music, till I creep through every
nerve.

Yes, you, like a ghostly cricket, creaking where a house was
burned:
"Dust and ashes, dead and done with, Venice spent what
Venice earned!
The soul, doubtless, is immortal—where a soul can be dis-
cerned.

"Yours for instance: you know physics, something of geology,
Mathematics are your pastime; souls shall rise in their degree;
Butterflies may dread extinction,—you'll not die, it cannot be!

"As for Venice and her people, merely born to bloom and drop,
Here on earth they bore their fruitage, mirth and folly were the crop:
What of soul was left, I wonder, when the kissing had to stop?

"Dust and ashes!" So you creak it, and I want the heart to scold.
Dear dead women, with such hair, too—what's become of all the gold
Used to hang and brush their bosoms? I feel chilly and grown old.

Robert Browning [1812-1889]

ABT VOGLER

(AFTER HE HAS BEEN EXTEMPORIZING UPON THE MUSICAL INSTRUMENT OF HIS INVENTION)

WOULD that the structure brave, the manifold music I build,
Bidding my organ obey, calling its keys to their work,
Claiming each slave of the sound, at a touch, as when Solomon willed
Armies of angels that soar, legions of demons that lurk,
Man, brute, reptile, fly,—alien of end and of aim,
Adverse, each from the other heaven-high, hell-deep removed,—
Should rush into sight at once as he named the ineffable Name,
And pile him a palace straight, to pleasure the princess he loved!

2950 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

Would it might tarry like his, the beautiful building of mine,
This which my keys in a crowd pressed and importuned
to raise!

Ah, one and all, how they helped, would dispart now and
now combine,

.Zealous to hasten the work, heighten their master his
praise!

And one would bury his brow with a blind plunge down to
hell,

Burrow awhile and build, broad on the roots of things,
Then up again swim into sight, having based me my palace
well,

Founded it, fearless of flame, flat on the nether springs.

And another would mount and march, like the excellent
minion he was,

Ay, another and yet another, one crowd but with many
a crest,

Raising my rampired walls of gold as transparent as glass,
Eager to do and die, yield each his place to the rest:

For higher still and higher (as a runner tips with fire,

When a great illumination surprises a festal night—

Outlining round and round Rome's dome from space to
spire)

Up, the pinnacled glory reached, and the pride of my soul
was in sight.

In sight? Not half! for it seemed, it was certain, to match
man's birth,

Nature in turn conceived, obeying an impulse as I;

And the emulous heaven yearned down, made effort to reach
the earth,

As the earth had done her best, in my passion, to scale
the sky:

Novel splendors burst forth, grew familiar and dwelt with
mine,

Not a point nor peak but found and fixed its wandering
star;

Meteor-moons, balls of blaze: and they did not pale nor pine,
For earth had attained to heaven, there was no more near
nor far.

Nay more; for there wanted not who walked in the glare
and glow,

Presences plain in the place; or, fresh from the Protoplast,
Furnished for ages to come, when a kindlier wind should
blow,

Lured now to begin and live, in a house to their liking at
last;

Or else the wonderful Dead who have passed through the
body and gone,

But were back once more to breathe in an old world worth
their new:

What never had been, was now; what was, as it shall be
anon;

And what is,—shall I say, matched both? for I was made
perfect too.

All through my keys that gave their sounds to a wish of my
soul,

All through my soul that praised as its wish flowed visibly
forth,

All through music and me! For think, had I painted the
whole,

Why, there it had stood, to see, nor the process so wonder-
worth.

Had I written the same, made verse—still, effect proceeds
from cause,

Ye know why the forms are fair, ye hear how the tale is
told;

It is all triumphant art, but art in obedience to laws,

Painter and poet are proud, in the artist-list enrolled:—

But here is the finger of God, a flash of the will that can,

Existent behind all laws, that made them, and, lo, they are!
And I know not if, save in this, such gift be allowed to man,
That out of three sounds he frame not a fourth sound
but a star.

Consider it well: each tone of our scale in itself is naught:

It is everywhere in the world—loud, soft, and all is said:
Give it to me to use! I mix it with two in my thought:

And there! Ye have heard and seen: consider and bow
the head!

2952 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

Well, it is gone at last, the palace of music I reared;
Gone! and the good tears start, the praises that come too
slow;

For one is assured at first, one scarce can say that he feared,
That he even gave it a thought, the gone thing was to go.
Never to be again! But many more of the kind

As good, nay, better perchance: is this your comfort to me?
To me, who must be saved because I cling with my mind
To the same, same self, same love, same God: ay, what
was, shall be.

Therefore to whom turn I but to thee, the ineffable Name?
Builder and maker, thou, of houses not made with hands!
What, have fear of change from thee who art ever the same?
Doubt that thy power can fill the heart that thy power
expands?

There shall never be one lost good! What was, shall live
as before;

The evil is null, is naught, is silence implying sound;
What was good shall be good, with, for evil, so much good
more;

On the earth the broken arcs; in the heaven a perfect
round.

All we have willed or hoped or dreamed of good shall exist;
Not its semblance, but itself; no beauty, nor good, nor
power

Whose voice has gone forth, but each survives for the melodist
When eternity affirms the conception of an hour.

The high that proved too high, the heroic for earth too hard,
The passion that left the ground to lose itself in the sky,
Are music sent up to God by the lover and the bard;
Enough that he heard it once: we shall hear it by and by.

And what is our failure here but a triumph's evidence
For the fullness of the days? Have we withered or agon-
ized?

Why else was the pause prolonged but that singing might
issue thence?

Why rushed the discords in, but that harmony should be
prized?

Sorrow is hard to bear, and doubt is slow to clear,
Each sufferer says his say, his scheme of the weal and woe:
But God has a few of us whom he whispers in the ear;
The rest may reason and welcome: 'tis we musicians know.

Well, it is earth with me; silence resumes her reign:
I will be patient and proud, and soberly acquiesce.
Give me the keys. I feel for the common chord again,
Sliding by semitones till I sink to the minor,—yes,
And I blunt it into a ninth, and I stand on alien ground,
Surveying awhile the heights I rolled from into the deep;
Which, hark, I have dared and done, for my resting-place
is found,
The C Major of this life: so, now I will try to sleep.

Robert Browning [1812-1889]

HACK AND HEW

HACK and Hew were the sons of God

In the earlier earth than now:

One at his right hand, one at his left,

To obey as he taught them how.

And Hack was blind, and Hew was dumb,

But both had the wild, wild heart;

And God's calm will was their burning will,

And the gist of their toil was art.

They made the moon and the belted stars,

They set the sun to ride;

They loosed the girdle and veil of the sea,

The wind and the purple tide.

Both flower and beast beneath their hands

To beauty and speed outgrew,—

The furious, fumbling hand of Hack,

And the glorying hand of Hew.

Then, fire and clay, they fashioned a man,

And painted him rosy brown;

And God himself blew hard in his eyes:

"Let them burn till they smoulder down!"

2954 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

And "There!" said Hack, and "There!" thought Hew,
 "We'll rest, for our toil is done."
But "Nay," the Master Workman said,
 "For your toil is just begun.

"And ye who served me of old as God
 Shall serve me anew as man,
Till I compass the dream that is in my heart,
 And perfect the vaster plan."

And still the craftsman over his craft,
 In the vague white light of dawn,
With God's calm will for his burning will,
 While the mounting day comes on,

Yearning, wind-swift, indolent, wild,
 Toils with those shadowy two,—
The faltering, restless hand of Hack,
 And the tireless hand of Hew.

Bliss Carman [1861—

ARS VICTRIX *

IMITATED FROM THÉOPHILE GAUTIER

YES; when the ways oppose—
 When the hard means rebel,
Fairer the work out-grows,—
 More potent far the spell.

O POET, then, forbear
 The loosely-sandalled verse,
Choose rather thou to wear
 The buskin—strait and terse;

Leave to the tyro's hand
 The limp and shapeless style;
See that thy form demand
 The labor of the file.

* For the original of this poem see page 3592.

SCULPTOR, do thou discard
 The yielding clay,—consign
 To Paros marble hard
 The beauty of thy line;—

Model thy Satyr's face
 For bronze of Syracuse;
 In the veined agate trace
 The profile of thy Muse.

PAINTER, that still must mix
 But transient tints anew,
 Thou in the furnace fix
 The firm enamel's hue;

Let the smooth tile receive
 Thy dove-drawn Erycine;
 Thy Sirens blue at eve
 Coiled in a wash of wine.

All passes. ART alone
 Enduring stays to us:
 The Bust out-lasts the throne,—
 The Coin, Tiberius;

Even the gods must go;
 Only the lofty Rhyme
 Not countless years o'erthrow,—
 Not long array of time.

Paint, chisel, then, or write;
 But, that the work surpass,
 With the hard fashion fight,—
 With the resisting mass.

Austin Dobson [1840—

FLOWER O' THE MIND

FANCIES

FANCIES are but streams
Of vain pleasure;
They who by their dreams
True joys measure,
Feasting, starve, laughing, weep,
Playing, smart; whilst in sleep
Fools, with shadows smiling,
Wake and find
Hopes like wind,
Idle hopes, beguiling.
Thoughts fly away; Time hath passed them;
Wake now, awake! see and taste them!
John Ford (?) [fl. 1639]

TOM O' BEDLAM

THE morn's my constant mistress,
And the lovely owl my marrow;
The flaming drake,
And the night-crow, make
Me music to my sorrow.

I know more than Apollo;
For oft, when he lies sleeping,
I behold the stars
At mortal wars,
And the rounded welkin weeping.

The moon embraces her shepherd,
And the Queen of Love her warrior;
While the first does horn
The stars of the morn,
And the next the heavenly farrier.

With a heart of furious fancies,
Whereof I am commander:
With a burning spear,
And a horse of air,
To the wilderness I wander;

With a Knight of ghosts and shadows,
I summoned am to Tourney:
Ten leagues beyond
The wild world's end;
Methinks it is no journey.

Unknown

L'ALLEGRO

HENCE loathèd Melancholy
Of Cerberus and blackest Midnight born,
In Stygian Cave forlorn
'Mongst horrid shapes, and shrieks, and sights unholy!
Find out some uncouth cell,
Where brooding Darkness spreads his jealous wings,
And the night-Raven sings;
There, under Ebon shades, and low-browed Rocks,
As ragged as thy Locks,
In dark Cimmerian desert ever dwell.
But come, thou Goddess fair and free,
In Heaven yclept Euphrosyne,
And by men, heart-easing Mirth,
Whom lovely Venus, at a birth,
With two sister Graces more,
To Ivy-crownèd Bacchus bore;
Or whether (as some Sager sing)
The frolic Wind that breathes the Spring,
Zephir with Aurora playing,
As he met her once a-Maying,
There, on Beds of Violets blue,
And fresh-blown Roses washed in dew,
Filled her with thee, a daughter fair,
So buxom, blithe, and debonair.
Haste thee, Nymph, and bring with thee
Jest and youthful Jollity,

Quips and Cranks, and wanton Wiles,
 Nods, and Becks, and Wreathèd Smiles,
 Such as hang on Hebe's cheek,
 And love to live in dimple sleek;
 Sport that wrinkled Care derides,
 And Laughter holding both his sides.
 Come, and trip it as ye go
 On the light fantastic toe,
 And in thy right hand lead with thee,
 The Mountain Nymph, sweet Liberty;
 And if I give thee honor due,
 Mirth, admit me of thy crew
 To live with her, and live with thee,
 In unprovèd pleasures free;
 To hear the Lark begin his flight,
 And, singing, startle the dull night,
 From his watch-tower in the skies,
 Till the dappled dawn doth rise;
 Then to come in spite of sorrow,
 And at my window bid good-morrow,
 Through the Sweet-Briar, or the Vine,
 Or the twisted Eglantine.
 While the Cock, with lively din,
 Scatters the rear of darkness thin,
 And to the stack, or the Barn-door,
 Stoutly struts his Dames before,
 Oft listening how the Hounds and horn
 Clearly rouse the slumbering morn,
 From the side of some Hoar Hill,
 Through the high wood echoing shrill.
 Some time walking not unseen
 By Hedge-row Elms, on Hillocks green,
 Right against the Eastern gate,
 Where the great Sun begins his state,
 Robed in flames, and Amber light,
 The clouds in thousand Liveries dight.
 While the Plowman, near at hand,
 Whistles o'er the Furrowed Land,
 And the Milkmaid singeth blithe,
 And the Mower whets his scythe,

And every Shepherd tells his tale
Under the Hawthorn in the dale.
Straight mine eye hath caught new pleasures
Whilst the Landscape round it measures,
Russet Lawns, and Fallows Gray,
Where the nibbling flocks do stray,
Mountains on whose barren breast
The laboring clouds do often rest:
Meadows trim with Daisies pied,
Shallow Brooks, and Rivers wide.
Towers, and Battlements it sees
Bosomed high in tufted Trees,
Where perhaps some beauty lies,
The Cynosure of neighboring eyes.
Hard by a Cottage chimney smokes,
From betwixt two aged Oaks,
Where Corydon and Thyrsis met.
Are at their savory dinner set
Of Herbs, and other Country Messes,
Which the neat-handed Phillis dresses;
And then in haste her Bower she leaves,
With Thestylis to bind the Sheaves;
Or, if the earlier season lead,
To the tanned Haycock in the Mead.
Sometimes with secure delight
The up-land Hamlets will invite,
When the merry Bells ring round,
And the jocund rebecks sound
To many a youth, and many a maid,
Dancing in the Chequered shade;
And young and old come forth to play
On a Sunshine Holyday,
Till the live-long day-light fail;
Then to the Spicy Nut-brown Ale,
With stories told of many a feat,
How Faery Mab the junkets eat.
She was pinched, and pulled she said;
And he, by Friar's Lantern led,
Tells how the drudging Goblin sweat,
To earn his Cream-bowl duly set,

When in one night, ere glimpse of morn,
 His shadowy Flail hath threshed the Corn
 That ten day-laborers could not end,
 Then lies him down, the Lubbar Fiend,
 And stretched out all the Chimney's length,
 Basks at the fire his hairy strength;
 And Crop-full out of doors he flings,
 Ere the first Cock his Matin rings.
 Thus done the Tales, to bed they creep,
 By whispering Winds soon lulled asleep.

Towered Cities please us then,
 And the busy hum of men,
 Where throngs of Knights and Barons bold,
 In weeds of Peace high triumphs hold,
 With store of Ladies, whose bright eyes
 Rain influence, and judge the prize
 Of Wit, or Arms, while both contend
 To win her Grace, whom all commend.
 There let Hymen oft appear
 In Saffron robe, with Taper clear,
 And pomp, and feast, and revelry,
 With mask, and antique Pageantry,
 Such sights as youthful Poets dream
 On Summer eves by haunted stream.
 Then to the well-trod stage anon,
 If Jonson's learnèd Sock be on,
 Or sweetest Shakespeare, Fancy's child,
 Warble his native Wood-notes wild;
 And ever, against eating Cares,
 Lap me in soft Lydian Airs,
 Married to immortal verse
 Such as the meeting soul may pierce
 In notes, with many a winding bout
 Of linkèd sweetness long drawn out,
 With wanton heed, and giddy cunning,
 The melting voice through mazes running;
 Untwisting all the chains that tie
 The hidden soul of harmony;
 That Orpheus' self may heave his head
 From golden slumber on a bed

Of heaped Elysian flowers, and hear
Such strains as would have won the ear
Of Pluto, to have quite set free
His half-regained Eurydice.
These delights, if thou canst give,
Mirth, with thee I mean to live.

John Milton [1608-1674]

IL PENSEROSO

HENCE vain deluding Joys,
The brood of Folly without father bred!
How little you bestead,
Or fill the fixèd mind with all your toys;
Dwell in some idle brain,
And fancies fond with gaudy shapes possess,
As thick and numberless
As the gay motes that people the sun-beams,
Or likest hovering dreams
The fickle Pensioners of Morpheus' train.
But hail, thou Goddess, sage and holy,
Hail, divinest Melancholy!
Whose Saintly visage is too bright
To hit the Sense of human sight;
And therefore to our weaker view,
O'er-laid with black, staid Wisdom's hue.
Black, but such as in esteem,
Prince Memnon's sister might beseem,
Or that Starred Ethiope Queen that strove
To set her beauty's praise above
The Sea Nymphs, and their powers offended.
Yet thou art higher far descended:
Thee bright-haired Vesta long of yore,
To solitary Saturn bore;
His daughter she (in Saturn's reign,
Such mixture was not held a stain).
Oft in glimmering Bowers, and glades
He met her, and in secret shades
Of woody Ida's inmost grove,
Whilst yet there was no fear of Jove.

Come, pensive Nun, devout and pure,
 Sober, steadfast, and demure,
 All in a robe of darkest grain,
 Flowing with majestic train,
 And sable stole of Cypress Lawn,
 Over thy decent shoulders drawn.
 Come, but keep thy wonted state,
 With even step, and musing gait,
 And looks commercing with the skies,
 Thy rapt soul sitting in thine eyes:
 There, held in holy passion still,
 Forget thy self to Marble, till
 With a sad Leaden downward cast,
 Thou fix them on the earth as fast.
 And join with thee calm Peace, and Quiet,
 Spare Fast, that oft with gods doth diet,
 And hears the Muses in a ring,
 Aye round about Jove's Altar sing.
 And add to these retirèd Leisure,
 That in trim Gardens takes his pleasure;
 But first, and chiefest, with thee bring,
 Him that yon soars on golden wing,
 Guiding the fiery-wheelèd throne,
 The Cherub Contemplation,
 And the mute Silence hist along,
 'Less Philomel will deign a Song,
 In her sweetest, saddest plight,
 Smoothing the rugged brow of Night,
 While Cynthia checks her Dragon yoke,
 Gently o'er th' accustomed Oak;
 Sweet Bird, that shunn'st the noise of folly,
 Most musical, most melancholy!
 Thee, Chauntress, oft the Woods among,
 I woo to hear thy even-song;
 And missing thee, I walk unseen
 On the dry smooth-shaven Green,
 To behold the wandering Moon,
 Riding near her highest noon,
 Like one that had been led astray
 Through the Heaven's wide pathless way;

And oft, as if her head she bowed,
 Stooping through a fleecy cloud.
 Oft on a Plat of rising ground,
 I hear the far-off Curfew sound,
 Over some wide-watered shore,
 Swinging slow with sullen roar;
 Or if the Air will not permit,
 Some still removèd place will fit,
 Where glowing Embers through the room
 Teach light to counterfeit a gloom,
 Far from all resort of mirth,
 Save the Cricket on the hearth,
 Or the Bellman's drowsy charm,
 To bless the doors from nightly harm:
 Or let my Lamp, at midnight hour,
 Be seen in some high lonely Tower,
 Where I may oft out-watch the Bear,
 With thrice great Hermes, or unsphere
 The spirit of Plato to unfold
 What Worlds, or what vast Regions hold
 The immortal mind that hath forsook
 Her mansion in this fleshly nook:
 And of those Dæmons that are found
 In fire, air, flood, or under ground,
 Whose power hath a true consent
 With Planet, or with Element.
 Some time let Gorgeous Tragedy
 In Sceptered Pall come sweeping by,
 Presenting Thebes, or Pelops' line,
 Or the tale of Troy divine,
 Or what (though rare) of later age,
 Ennoblèd hath the Buskined stage.

But, O sad Virgin, that thy power
 Might raise Musæus from his bower,
 Or bid the soul of Orpheus sing
 Such notes as, warbled to the string,
 Drew Iron tears down Pluto's cheek,
 And made Hell grant what Love did seek.
 Or call up him that left half told
 The story of Cambuscan bold,

Of Camball, and of Algarsife,
 And who had Canace to wife,
 That owned the virtuous Ring and Glass,
 And of the wondrous Horse of Brass,
 On which the Tartar King did ride;
 And if aught else great Bards beside,
 In sage and solemn tunes have sung,
 Of Tourneys and of Trophies hung;
 Of Forests, and enchantments drear,
 Where more is meant than meets the ear.
 Thus, Night, oft see me in thy pale career,
 Till civil-suited Morn appear,
 Not tricked and frowncd as she was wont,
 With the Attic Boy to hunt,
 But Kerchiefed in a comely Cloud,
 While rocking Winds are Piping loud,
 Or ushered with a shower still,
 When the gust hath blown his fill,
 Ending on the rustling Leaves,
 With minute-drops from off the Eaves.
 And when the Sun begins to fling
 His flaring beams, me, Goddess, bring
 To archèd walks of twilight groves,
 And shadows brown, that Sylvan loves,
 Of Pine, or monumental Oak,
 Where the rude Ax with heavèd stroke,
 Was never heard the Nymphs to daunt,
 Or fright them from their hallowed haunt.
 There in close covert by some Brook,
 Where no profaner eye may look,
 Hide me from Day's garish eye,
 While the Bee with Honied thigh,
 That at her flowery work doth sing,
 And the Waters murmuring
 With such consort as they keep,
 Entice the dewy-feathered Sleep;
 And let some strange mysterious dream,
 Wave at his Wings, in Airy stream
 Of lively portraiture displayed,
 Softly on my eye-lids laid.

And as I wake, sweet music breathe
Above, about, or underneath,
Sent by some Spirit to mortals good,
Or th' unseen Genius of the Wood.

But let my due feet never fail,
To walk the studious Cloister's pale,
And love the high embowèd Roof,
With antique Pillars massy proof,
And storied Windows richly dight.
Casting a dim religious light.
There let the pealing Organ blow,
To the full voiced choir below,
In Service high, and Anthems clear,
As may with sweetness, through mine ear,
Dissolve me into ecstasies,
And bring all Heaven before mine eyes.
And may at last my weary age
Find out the peaceful hermitage,
The Hairy Gown and Mossy Cell,
Where I may sit and rightlly spell
Of every Star that Heaven doth shew,
And every Herb that sips the dew;
Till old experience do attain
To something like Prophetic strain.
These pleasures, Melancholy, give,
And I with thee will choose to live.

John Milton [1608-1674]

KILMENY

From "The Queen's Wake"

BONNY Kilmeny gaed up the glen;
But it wasna to meet Duncraig's men,
Nor the rosy monk of the isle to see,
For Kilmeny was pure as pure could be.
It was only to hear the yorlin sing,
And pu' the cress-flower round the spring;—
The scarlet hypp, and the hind-berrye,
And the nut that hung frae the hazel-tree;
For Kilmeny was pure as pure could be.

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But lang may her minny look o'er the wa',
 And lang may she seek i' the green-wood shaw;
 Lang the laird o' Duneira blame,
 And lang, lang greet or Kilmeny come hame!

When many a day had come and fled,
 When grief grew calm, and hope was dead,
 When mass for Kilmeny's soul had been sung,
 When the bedesman had prayed, and the dead-bell rung;
 Late, late in a gloamin', when all was still,
 When the fringe was red on the westlin hill,
 The wood was sere, the moon i' the wane,
 The reek o' the cot hung over the plain,
 Like a little wee cloud in the world its lane;
 When the ingle lowed wi' an eiry leme,
 Late, late in the gloamin' Kilmeny came hame!

"Kilmeny, Kilmeny, where have you been?
 Lang hae we sought baith holt and den;
 By burn, by ford, by green-wood tree,
 Yet you are halesome and fair to see.
 Where gat ye that joup o' the lily sheen?
 That bonny snood o' the birk sae green?
 And those roses, the fairest that ever was seen?
 Kilmeny, Kilmeny, where have you been?"

Kilmeny looked up wi' a lovely grace,
 But nae smile was seen on Kilmeny's face;
 As still was her look, and as still was her e'e,
 As the stillness that lay on the emerant lea,
 Or the mist that sleeps on a waveless sea.
 For Kilmeny had been she knew not where,
 And Kilmeny had seen what she could not declare;
 Kilmeny had been where the cock never crew,
 Where the rain never fell, and the wind never blew;
 But it seemed as the harp of the sky had rung,
 And the airs of heaven played round her tongue,
 When she spake of the lovely forms she had seen,
 And a land where sin had never been;
 A land of love, and a land of light,
 Withouten sun, or moon, or night;

Where the river swa'd a living stream,
And the light a pure celestial beam;
The land of vision, it would seem,
A still, an everlasting dream.

In yon green-wood there is a waik,
And in that waik there is a wene,
And in that wene there is a maike,
That neither has flesh, nor blood, nor bane;
And down in yon green-wood he walks his lane.

In that green wene Kilmeny lay,
Her bosom happed wi' the flowerets gay;
But the air was soft, and the silence deep,
And bonny Kilmeny fell sound asleep;
She kenned nae mair, nor opened her e'e,
Till waked by the hymns of a far countrie.

She woke on a couch of silk sae slim,
All striped wi' the bars of the rainbow's rim;
And lovely beings around were rife,
Who erst had travelled mortal life;
And aye they smiled, and 'gan to spier:
"What spirit has brought this mortal here?"

"Lang have I ranged the world wide,"
A meek and reverend fere replied;
"Baith night and day I have watched the fair
Eident a thousand years and mair.
Yes, I have watched o'er ilk degree,
Wherever blooms femenitye;
But sinless virgin, free of stain,
In mind and body, fand I nane.
Never, since the banquet of time,
Found I a virgin in her prime,
Till late this bonny maiden I saw,
As spotless as the morning snaw:
Full twenty years she has lived as free
As the spirits that sojourn in this countrie.
I have brought her away frae the snares of men,
That sin or death she never may ken."

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They clasped her waist, and her hands sae fair;
 They kissed her cheeks, and they kemined her hair;
 And round came many a blooming fere,
 Saying, "Bonny Kilmeny, ye're welcome here!
 Women are freed of the littand scorn;
 O, blest be the day Kilmeny was born!
 Now shall the land of the spirits see,
 Now shall it ken, what a woman may be!
 Many a lang year, in sorrow and pain,
 Many a lang year through the world we've gane,
 Commissioned to watch fair woman-kind,
 For it's they who nurse the immortal mind.
 We have watched their steps as the dawning shone,
 And deep in the green-wood walks alone;
 By lily bower and silken bed,
 The viewless tears have been o'er them shed;
 Have soothed their ardent minds to sleep,
 Or left the couch of love to weep.
 We have seen! we have seen! but the time maun come,
 And the angels will weep at the day of doom!

"O, would the fairest of mortal kind
 Aye keep these holy truths in mind,
 That kindred spirits their motions see,
 Who watch their ways with anxious e'e,
 And grieve for the guilt of humanity!
 O, sweet to Heaven the maiden's prayer,
 And the sigh that heaves a bosom sae fair!
 And dear to Heaven the words of truth,
 And the praise of virtue frae beauty's mouth!
 And dear to the viewless forms of air
 The minds that kythes as the body fair!

"O bonny Kilmeny! free frae stain,
 If ever you seek the world again,
 That world of sin, of sorrow and fear,
 O, tell of the joys that are waiting here;
 And tell of the signs you shall shortly see;
 Of the times that are now, and the times that shall be."

They lifted Kilmeny, they led her away,
And she walked in the light of a sunless day;
The sky was a dome of crystal bright,
The fountain of vision, and fountain of light;
The emerald fields were of dazzling glow,
And the flowers of everlasting blow.
Then deep in the stream her body they laid,
That her youth and beauty never might fade;
And they smiled on Heaven, when they saw her lie
In the stream of life that wandered by.
And she heard a song,—she heard it sung,
She kenned not where; but sae sweetly it rung,
It fell on her ear like a dream of the morn,—
“O, blest be the day Kilmeny was born!
Now shall the land of the spirits see,
Now shall it ken, what a woman may be!
The sun that shines on the world sae bright,
A borrowed gleid frae the fountain of light;
And the moon that sleeks the sky sac dun,
Like a gouden bow, or a beamless sun,
Shall wear away, and be seen nae mair;
And the angels shall miss them, travelling the air.
But lang, lang after, baith night and day,
When the sun and the world have fled away,
When the sinner has gane to his waesome doom,
Kilmeny shall smile in eternal bloom!”

They bore her away, she wist not how,
For she felt not arm nor rest below;
But so swift they wained her through the light,
’Twas like the motion of sound or sight;
They seemed to split the gales of air,
And yet nor gale nor breeze was there.
Unnumbered groves below them grew;
They came, they passed, and backward flew,
Like floods of blossoms gliding on,
A moment seen, in a moment gone.
Ah, never vales to mortal view
Appeared like those o’er which they flew,

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That land to human spirits given,
The lowermost vales of the storied heaven;
From thence they can view the world below,
And heaven's blue gates with sapphires glow,—
More glory yet unmeet to know.

They bore her far to a mountain green,
To see what mortal never had seen;
And they seated her high on a purple sward,
And bade her heed what she saw and heard,
And note the changes the spirits wrought;
For now she lived in the land of thought.—
She looked, and she saw nor sun nor skies,
But a crystal dome of a thousand dyes;
She looked, and she saw nae land aright,
But an endless whirl of glory and light;
And radiant beings went and came,
Far swifter than wind or the linkèd flame;
She hid her e'en frae the dazzling view;
She looked again, and the scene was new.

She saw a sun in a summer sky,
And clouds of amber sailing by;
A lovely land beneath her lay,
And that land had lakes and mountains gray:
And that land had valleys and hoary piles,
And marlèd seas, and a thousand isles;
Its fields were speckled, its forests green,
And its lakes were all of the dazzling sheen,
Like magic mirrors, where slumbering lay
The sun and the sky and the cloudlet gray,
Which heaved and trembled, and gently swung;
On every shore they seemed to be hung;
For there they were seen on their downward plain
A thousand times and a thousand again;
In winding lake and placid firth,
Little peaceful heavens in the bosom of earth.

Kilmeny sighed and seemed to grieve,
For she found her heart to that land did cleave.

She saw the corn wave on the vale;
She saw the deer run down the dale;
She saw the plaid and the broad claymore,
And the brows that the badge of freedom bore;
And she thought she had seen the land before.

She saw a lady sit on a throne,
The fairest that ever the sun shone on:
A lion licked her hand of milk,
And she held him in a leish of silk,
And a leifu' maiden stood at her knee,
With a silver wand and melting e'e;
Her sovereign shield, till love stole in,
And poisoned all the fount within.

Then a gruff, untoward bedesman came,
And hundert the lion on his dame;
And the guardian maid wi' the dauntless e'e,
She dropped a tear, and left her knee;
And she saw till the queen frae the lion fled,
Till the bonniest flower o' the world lay dead;
A coffin was set on a distant plain,
And she saw the red blood fall like rain.
Then bonny Kilmeny's heart grew sair,
And she turned away, and could look nae mair.

Then the gruff, grim carle girmed amain,
And they trampled him down, but he rose again;
And he baited the lion to deeds of weir,
Till he lapped the blood to the kingdom dear;
And weening his head was danger-proof
When crowned with the rose and clover leaf,
He gowled at the carle, and chased him away
To feed wi' the deer on the mountain gray.
He gowled at the carle, and he gecked at heaven;
But his mark was set, and his arles given.
Kilmeny a while her e'en withdrew;
She looked again, and the scene was new.

She saw below her, fair unfurled,
One half of all the glowing world,

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Where oceans rolled and rivers ran,
 To bound the aims of sinful man.
 She saw a people fierce and fell,
 Burst frae their bounds like fiends of hell;
 There lilies grew, and the eagle flew;
 And she herked on her ravening crew,
 Till the cities and towers were wrapped in a blaze,
 And the thunder it roared o'er the lands and the seas.
 The widows they wailed, and the red blood ran,
 And she threatened an end to the race of man.
 She never lened, nor stood in awe,
 Till caught by the lion's deadly paw.
 O, then the eagle swinked for life,
 And brainzelled up a mortal strife;
 But flew she north, or flew she south,
 She met wi' the gowl of the lion's mouth.

With a mooted wing and waefu' maen,
 The eagle sought her eiry again;
 But lang may she cower in her bloody nest,
 And lang, lang sleek her wounded breast,
 Before she sey another flight,
 To play wi' the norland lion's might.

But to sing the sights Kilmeny saw,
 So far surpassing nature's law,
 The singer's voice wad sink away,
 And the string of his harp wad cease to play.
 But she saw till the sorrows of man were by
 And all was love and harmony;
 Till the stars of heaven fell calmly away,
 Like the flakes of snaw on a winter's day.

Then Kilmeny begged again to see
 The friends she had left in her ain countrie,
 To tell of the place where she had been,
 And the glories that lay in the land unseen;
 To warn the living maidens fair,
 The loved of heaven, the spirits' care,
 That all whose minds unmeled remain
 Shall bloom in beauty when time is gane.

With distant music, soft and deep,
They lulled Kilmeny sound asleep;
And when she awakened, she lay her lane,
All happed wi' flowers in the green-wood wene.
When seven long years had come and fled,
When grief was calm, and hope was dead,
When scarce was remembered Kilmeny's name,
Late, late in a gloamin', Kilmeny came hamel
And O, her beauty was fair to see,
But still and steadfast was her e'e!
Such beauty bard may never declare,
For there was no pride nor passion there;
And the soft desire of maidens' e'en,
In that mild face could never be seen.
Her seymar was the lily flower,
And her cheek the moss-rose in the shower;
And her voice like the distant melody
That floats along the twilight sea.
But she loved to raik the lanely glen,
And keep afar frae the haunts of men;
Her holy hymns unheard to sing,
To suck the flowers and drink the spring.
But wherever her peaceful form appeared,
The wild beasts of the hills were cheered;
The wolf played blithely round the field;
The lordly byson lowed and kneeled;
The dun deer wooed with manner bland,
And cowered aneath her lily hand.
And when at eve the woodlands rung,
When hymns of other worlds she sung
In ecstasy of sweet devotion,
O, then the glen was all in motion!
The wild beasts of the forest came,
Broke from their bughts and faulds the tame,
And goved around, charmed and amazed;
Even the dull cattle crooned, and gazed,
And murmured, and looked with anxious pain
For something the mystery to explain.
The buzzard came with the throstle-cock,
The corby left her houf in the rock;

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The blackbird alang wi' the eagle flew;
 The hind came tripping o'er the dew;
 The wolf and the kid their raikie began;
 And the kid, and the lamb, and the leveret ran;
 The hawk and the hern attour them hung,
 And the merle and the mavis forhooyed their young;
 And all in a peaceful ring were hurled:
 It was like an eve in a sinless world!

When a month and day had come and gane,
 Kilmeny sought the green-wood wene;
 There laid her down on the leaves sae green,
 And Kilmeny on earth was never mair seen.
 But O the words that fell frae her mouth
 Were words of wonder, and words of truth!
 But all the land were in fear and dread,
 For they kendna whether she was living or dead.
 It wasna her hame, and she couldna remain;
 She left this world of sorrow and pain,
 And returned to the land of thought again.

James Hogg [1770-1835]

KUBLA KHAN

IN Xanadu did Kubla Khan
 A stately pleasure-dome decree:
 Where Alph, the sacred river, ran
 Through caverns measureless to man
 Down to a sunless sea.
 So twice five miles of fertile ground
 With walls and towers were girdled round:
 And there were gardens bright with sinuous rills,
 Where blossomed many an incense-bearing tree;
 And here were forests ancient as the hills,
 Enfolding sunny spots of greenery.

But O! that deep romantic chasm which slanted
 Down the green hill athwart a cedarn cover!
 A savage place! as holy and enchanted
 As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted
 By woman wailing for her demon-lover!

And from this chasm, with ceaseless turmoil seething,
As if this Earth in fast thick pants were breathing,
A mighty fountain momentarily was forced,
Amid whose swift half-intermitted burst
Huge fragments vaulted like rebounding hail,
Or chaffy grain beneath the thresher's flail:
And 'mid these dancing rocks at once and ever
It flung up momentarily the sacred river.
Five miles meandering with a mazy motion
Through wood and dale the sacred river ran,
Then reached the caverns measureless to man,
And sank in tumult to a lifeless ocean:
And 'mid this tumult Kubla heard from far
Ancestral voices prophesying war!

 The shadow of the dome of pleasure
 Floated midway on the waves;
 Where was heard the mingled measure
 From the fountain and the caves.
It was a miracle of rare device,
A sunny pleasure-dome with caves of ice!

 A damsel with a dulcimer
 In a vision once I saw:
 It was an Abyssinian maid,
 And on her dulcimer she played,
 Singing of Mount Abora.
 Could I revive within me
 Her symphony and song,
 To such a deep delight 'twould win me
That with music loud and long,
I would build that dome in air,
That sunny dome! those caves of ice!
And all who heard should see them there,
And all should cry, Beware! Beware!
His flashing eyes, his floating hair!
Weave a circle round him thrice,
And close your eyes with holy dread,
For he on honey-dew hath fed,
And drunk the milk of Paradise.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge [1772-1834]

HYMN OF PAN

FROM the forests and highlands
 We come, we come;
 From the river-girt islands,
 Where loud waves are dumb,
 Listening to my sweet pipings.
 The wind in the reeds and the rushes,
 The bees on the bells of thyme,
 The birds on the myrtle bushes,
 The cicale above in the lime,
 And the lizards below in the grass,
 Were as silent as ever old Tmolus was,
 Listening to my sweet pipings.

Liquid Peneus was flowing,
 And all dark Tempe lay
 In Pelion's shadow, outgrowing
 The light of the dying day,
 Speeded by my sweet pipings.
 The Sileni, and Sylvans, and Fauns,
 And the Nymphs of the woods and waves,
 To the edge of the moist river-lawns,
 And the brink of the dewy caves,
 And all that did then attend and follow,
 Were silent with love, as you now, Apollo,
 With envy of my sweet pipings.

I sang of the dancing Stars,
 I sang of the dædal Earth,
 And of Heaven, and the giant wars,
 And Love, and Death, and Birth.
 And then I changed my pipings—
 Singing how down the vale of Mænalus
 I pursued a maiden, and clasped a reed:
 Gods and men, we are all deluded thus;
 It breaks in our bosom, and then we bleed.
 All wept—as I think both ye now would,
 If envy or age had not frozen your blood,
 At the sorrow of my sweet pipings.

Percy Bysshe Shelley [1792-1822]

ODE ON A GRECIAN URN

THOU still unravished bride of quietness,
Thou foster-child of Silence and slow Time,
Sylvan historian, who canst thus express
A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme:
What leaf-fringed legend haunts about thy shape
Of deities or mortals, or of both,
In Tempe or the dales of Arcady?
What men or gods are these? What maidens loth?
What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?
What pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstasy?

Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on;
Not to the sensual ear, but, more endeared,
Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone:
Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not leave
Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare;
Bold Lover, never, never canst thou kiss,
Though winning near the goal—yet, do not grieve;
She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,
For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair!

Ah, happy, happy boughs! that cannot shed
Your leaves, nor ever bid the Spring adieu;
And, happy melodist, unwearied,
For ever piping songs for ever new;
More happy love! more happy, happy love!
For ever warm and still to be enjoyed,
For ever panting and for ever young;
All breathing human passion far above,
That leaves a heart high-sorrowful and cloyed,
A burning forehead, and a parching tongue.

Who are these coming to the sacrifice?
To what green altar, O mysterious priest,
Lead'st thou that heifer lowing at the skies,
And all her silken flanks with garlands dressed?

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What little town by river or sea-shore,
 Or mountain-built with peaceful citadel,
 Is emptied of its folk, this pious morn?
 And, little town, thy streets for evermore
 Will silent be; and not a soul, to tell
 Why thou art desolate, can e'er return.

O Attic shape! fair attitude! with brede
 Of marble men and maidens overwrought,
 With forest branches and the trodden weed;
 Thou, silent form! dost tease us out of thought
 As doth eternity. Cold Pastoral!
 When old age shall this generation waste,
 Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe
 Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st,
 "Beauty is truth, truth beauty,"—that is all
 Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.

John Keats [1795-1821]

ODE TO PSYCHE

O GODDESS! hear these tuneless numbers, wrung
 By sweet enforcement and remembrance dear,
 And pardon that thy secrets should be sung
 Even into thine own soft-conchèd ear:
 Surely I dreamed to-day, or did I see
 The wingèd Psyche with awakened eyes?
 I wandered in a forest thoughtlessly,
 And, on the sudden, fainting with surprise,
 Saw two fair creatures, couchèd side by side
 In deepest grass, beneath the whispering roof
 Of leaves and trembled blossoms, where there ran
 A brooklet, scarce espied:
 'Mid hushed, cool-rooted flowers fragrant-eyed,
 Blue, silver-white, and budded Tyrian,
 They lay calm-breathing on the bedded grass;
 Their arms embracèd, and their pinions too;
 Their lips touched not, but had not bade adieu,
 As if disjoinèd by soft-handed slumber,
 And ready still past kisses to outnumber

At tender eye-dawn of aureorean love:
The wingèd boy I knew;
But who wast thou, O happy, happy dove?
His Psyche true!

O latest-born and loveliest vision far
Of all Olympus' faded hierarchy!
Fairer than Phœbe's sapphire-regioned star,
Or Vesper, amorous glow-worm of the sky;
Fairer than these, though temple thou hast none,
Nor altar heaped with flowers;
Nor Virgin-choir to make delicious moan
Upon the midnight hours;
No voice, no lute, no pipe, no incense sweet
From chain-swung censer teeming;
No shrine, no grove, no oracle, no heat
Of pale-mouthed prophet dreaming.

O brightest! though too late for antique vows,
Too, too late for the fond believing lyre,
When holy were the haunted forest boughs,
Holy the air, the water, and the fire;
Yet even in these days so far retired
From happy pieties, thy lucent fans,
Fluttering among the faint Olympians,
I see, and sing, by my own eyes inspired.
So let me be thy choir, and make a moan
Upon the midnight hours!
Thy voice, thy lute, thy pipe, thy incense sweet
From swingèd censer teeming:
Thy shrine, thy grove, thy oracle, thy heat
Of pale-mouthed prophet dreaming.

Yes, I will be thy priest, and build a fane
In some untrodden region of my mind,
Where branchèd thoughts, new-grown with pleasant pain,
Instead of pines shall murmur in the wind:
Far, far around shall those dark-clustered trees
Fledge the wild-ridgèd mountains steep by steep;
And there by zephyrs, streams, and birds, and bees,
The moss-lain Dryads shall be lulled to sleep;

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And in the midst of this wide quietness
 A rosy sanctuary will I dress
 With the wreathed trellis of a working brain,
 With buds, and bells, and stars without a name,
 With all the gardener Fancy e'er could feign,
 Who, breeding flowers, will never breed the same;
 And there shall be for thee all soft delight
 That shadowy thought can win,
 A bright torch, and a casement ope at night,
 To let the warm Love in!

John Keats [1795-1821]

TO FANCY

EVER let the Fancy roam,
 Pleasure never is at home:
 At a touch sweet Pleasure melteth,
 Like to bubbles when rain pelteth;
 Then let wingèd Fancy wander
 Through the thought still spread beyond her:
 Open wide the mind's cage-door,
 She'll dart forth, and cloudward soar.
 O sweet Fancy! let her loose;
 Summer's joys are spoilt by use,
 And the enjoying of the Spring
 Fades as does its blossoming;
 Autumn's red-lipped fruitage too,
 Blushing through the mist and dew,
 Cloys with tasting: What do then?
 Sit thee by the ingle, when
 The sear faggot blazes bright,
 Spirit of a winter's night;
 When the soundless earth is muffled,
 And the cakèd snow is shuffled
 From the ploughboy's heavy shoon;
 When the Night doth meet the Noon
 In a dark conspiracy
 To banish Even from her sky.
 Sit thee there, and send abroad,
 With a mind self-overawed,

Fancy, high-commissioned:—send her!
She has vassals to attend her:
She will bring, in spite of frost,
Beauties that the earth hath lost;
She will bring thee, all together,
All delights of summer weather;
All the buds and bells of May,
From dewy sward or thorny spray;
All the heapèd Autumn's wealth,
With a still, mysterious stealth:
She will mix these pleasures up
Like three fit wines in a cup,
And thou shalt quaff it:—thou shalt hear
Distant harvest-carols clear;
Rustle of the reapèd corn;
Sweet birds antheming the morn:
And, in the same moment—hark!
'Tis the early April lark,
Or the rooks, with busy caw,
Foraging for sticks and straw.
Thou shalt, at one glance, behold
The daisy and the marigold;
White-plumed lilies, and the first
Hedge-grown primrose that hath burst;
Shaded hyacinth, alway
Sapphire queen of the mid-May;
And every leaf, and every flower
Pearlèd with the self-same shower.
Thou shalt see the field-mouse peep
Meagre from its cellèd sleep;
And the snake all winter-thin
Cast on sunny bank its skin;
Freckled nest-eggs thou shalt see
Hatching in the hawthorn-tree,
When the hen-bird's wing doth rest
Quiet on her mossy nest;
Then the hurry and alarm
When the bee-hive casts its swarm;
Acorns ripe down-pattering,
While the autumn breezes sing.

Oh, sweet Fancy! let her loose;
 Every thing is spoilt by use:
 Where's the cheek that doth not fade,
 Too much gazed at? Where's the maid
 Whose lip mature is ever new?
 Where's the eye, however blue,
 Doth not weary? Where's the face
 One would meet in every place?
 Where's the voice, however soft,
 One would hear so very oft?
 At a touch sweet Pleasure melteth
 Like to bubbles when rain pelteth.
 Let, then, wingèd Fancy find
 Thee a mistress to thy mind:
 Dulcet-eyed as Ceres' daughter,
 Ere the God of Torment taught her
 How to frown and how to chide;
 With a waist and with a side
 White as Hebe's, when her zone
 Slipped its golden clasp, and down
 Fell her kirtle to her feet,
 While she held the goblet sweet,
 And Jove grew languid.—Break the mesh
 Of the Fancy's silken leash;
 Quickly break her prison-string,
 And such joys as these she'll bring.—
 Let the wingèd Fancy roam,
 Pleasure never is at home.

John Keats [1795-1821]

THE HAUNTED PALACE

IN the greenest of our valleys
 By good angels tenanted,
 Once a fair and stately palace—
 Radiant palace—reared its head.
 In the monarch Thought's dominion,
 It stood there;
 Never seraph spread a pinion
 Over fabric half so fair.

Banners yellow, glorious, golden,
On its roof did float and flow
(This—all this—was in the olden
Time long ago),
And every gentle air that dallied,
In that sweet day,
Along the ramparts plumed and pallid,
A wingèd odor went away.

Wanderers in that happy valley
Through two luminous windows saw
Spirits moving musically,
To a lute's well-tunèd law,
Round about a throne where, sitting
(Porphyrogene),
In state his glory well befitting,
The ruler of the realm was seen.

And all with pearl and ruby glowing
Was the fair palace door,
Through which came flowing, flowing, flowing,
And sparkling evermore,
A troop of Echoes, whose sweet duty
Was but to sing,
In voices of surpassing beauty,
The wit and wisdom of their king.

But evil things, in robes of sorrow,
Assailed the monarch's high estate;
(Ah, let us mourn, for never morrow
Shall dawn upon him desolate!)

And round about his home, the glory
That blushed and bloomed,
Is but a dim-remembered story
Of the old time entombed.

And travelers now, within that valley,
Through the red-litten windows see
Vast forms that move fantastically
To a discordant melody;

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While, like a ghastly rapid river,
Through the pale door
A hideous throng rush out forever,
And laugh—but smile no more.

Edgar Allan Poe [1809-1849]

THE RAVEN

ONCE upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak and weary,
Over many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore,—
While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there came a tapping,
As of some one gently rapping, rapping at my chamber door.
“’Tis some visitor,” I muttered, “tapping at my chamber door:
Only this and nothing more.”

Ah, distinctly I remember it was in the bleak December,
And each separate dying ember wrought its ghost upon the floor.
Eagerly I wished the morrow;—vainly I had sought to borrow
From my books surcease of sorrow—sorrow for the lost Lenore,
For the rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name Lenore:
Nameless here for evermore.

And the silken sad uncertain rustling of each purple curtain
Thrilled me—filled me with fantastic terrors never felt before;
So that now, to still the beating of my heart, I stood repeating,
“’Tis some visitor entreating entrance at my chamber door,
Some late visitor entreating entrance at my chamber door:
This it is and nothing more.”

Presently my soul grew stronger; hesitating then no longer,
"Sir," said I, "or Madam, truly your forgiveness I implore;
But the fact is I was napping, and so gently you came rapping,
And so faintly you came tapping, tapping at my chamber door,
That I scarce was sure I heard you"—here I opened wide
the door:—
Darkness there and nothing more.

Deep into that darkness peering, long I stood there wondering,
fearing,
Doubting, dreaming dreams no mortals ever dared to dream
before;
But the silence was unbroken, and the stillness gave no
token,
And the only word there spoken was the whispered word,
"Lenore!"
This I whispered, and an echo murmured back the word,
"Lenore!"
Merely this and nothing more.

Back into the chamber turning, all my soul within me burning,
Soon again I heard a tapping somewhat louder than before.
"Surely," said I, "surely that is something at my window
lattice;
Let me see, then, what thereat is, and this mystery explore;
Let my heart be still a moment and this mystery explore;
'Tis the wind and nothing more."

Open here I flung the shutter, when, with many a flirt and
flutter,
In there stepped a stately Raven of the saintly days of yore.
Not the least obeisance made he; not a minute stopped or
stayed he;
But, with mien of lord or lady, perched above my chamber
door,
Perched upon a bust of Pallas just above my chamber door:
Perched, and sat, and nothing more.

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Then this ebony bird beguiling my sad fancy into smiling
By the grave and stern decorum of the countenance it
wore,—

“Though thy crest be shorn and shaven, thou,” I said, “art
sure no craven,

Ghastly grim and ancient Raven wandering from the
Nightly shore:

Tell me what thy lordly name is on the Night’s Plutonian
shore!”

Quoth the Raven, “Nevermore.”

Much I marvelled this ungainly fowl to hear discourse so
plainly,

Though its answer little meaning—little relevancy bore;
For we cannot help agreeing that no living human being
Ever yet was blessed with seeing bird above his chamber
door,

Bird or beast upon the sculptured bust above his chamber
door,

With such name as “Nevermore.”

But the Raven, sitting lonely on the placid bust, spoke only
That one word, as if his soul in that one word he did out-
pour.

Nothing further then he uttered, not a feather then he
fluttered,

Till I scarcely more than muttered,—“Other friends have
flown before;

On the morrow *he* will leave me, as my Hopes have flown
before.”

Then the bird said, “Nevermore.”

Startled at the stillness broken by reply so aptly spoken,
“Doubtless,” said I, “what it utters is its only stock and
store,

Caught from some unhappy master whom unmerciful Dis-
aster

Followed fast and followed faster till his songs one burden
bore:

Till the dirges of his Hope that melancholy burden bore
Of ‘Never—nevermore.’”

But the Raven still beguiling all my sad soul into smiling,
Straight I wheeled a cushioned seat in front of bird and bust
and door;

Then, upon the velvet sinking, I betook myself to linking
Fancy unto fancy, thinking what this ominous bird of yore,
What this grim, ungainly, ghastly, gaunt, and ominous bird
of yore

Meant in croaking "Nevermore."

This I sat engaged in guessing, but no syllable expressing
To the fowl whose fiery eyes now burned into my bosom's
core;

This and more I sat divining, with my head at ease reclin-
ing

On the cushion's velvet lining that the lamplight gloated
o'er,

But whose velvet violet lining with the lamp-light gloating
o'er

She shall press, ah, nevermore!

Then, methought, the air grew denser, perfumed from an un-
seen censer

Swung by seraphim whose foot-falls tinkled on the tufted
floor.

"Wretch," I cried, "thy God hath lent thee—by these
angels he hath sent thee

Respite—respite and nepenthe from thy memories of Lenore!

Quaff, oh quaff this kind nepenthe, and forget this lost
Lenore!"

Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

"Prophet!" said I, "thing of evil! prophet still, if bird or
devil!

Whether Tempter sent, or whether tempest tossed thee here
ashore,

Desolate, yet all undaunted, on this desert land enchanted—

On this home by Horror haunted—tell me truly, I implore:

Is there—is there balm in Gilead?—tell me—tell me, I im-
plore!"

Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

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"Prophet!" said I, "thing of evil! prophet still, if bird or devil!

By that Heaven that bends above us, by that God we both adore,

Tell this soul with sorrow laden if, within the distant Aidenn,
It shall clasp a sainted maiden whom the angels name
Lenore:

Clasp a rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name
Lenore!"

Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

"Be that word our sign of parting, bird or fiend!" I shrieked,
upstarting.

"Get thee back into the tempest and the Night's Plutonian
shore!

Leave no black plume as a token of that lie thy soul hath
spoken!

Leave my loneliness unbroken! quit the bust above my door!
Take thy beak from out my heart, and take thy form from
off my door!"

Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

And the Raven, never flitting, still is sitting, still is sitting
On the pallid bust of Pallas just above my chamber door;
And his eyes have all the seeming of a demon's that is
dreaming,

And the lamp-light o'er him streaming throws his shadow
on the floor;

And my soul from out that shadow that lies floating on the
floor

Shall be lifted—nevermore!

Edgar Allan Poe [1809-1849]

THE BELLS

I

HEAR the sledges with the bells,

Silver bells!

What a world of merriment their melody foretells!

How they tinkle, tinkle, tinkle,
 In the icy air of night!
While the stars that oversprinkle
All the heavens seem to twinkle
 With a crystalline delight;
 Keeping time, time, time,
 In a sort of Runic rhyme,
To the tintinabulation that so musically wells
 From the bells, bells, bells, bells,
 Bells, bells, bells—
From the jingling and the tinkling of the bells.

II

Hear the mellow wedding bells,
 Golden bells!
What a world of happiness their harmony foretells!
 Through the balmy air of night
 How they ring out their delight!
From the molten-golden notes,
 And all in tune,
What a liquid ditty floats
To the turtle-dove that listens, while she gloats
 On the moon!
Oh, from out the sounding cells,
What a gush of euphony voluminously wells!
 How it swells!
 How it dwells
 On the future; how it tells
 Of the rapture that impels
To the swinging and the ringing
 Of the bells, bells, bells,
 Of the bells, bells, bells, bells,
 Bells, bells, bells—
To the rhyming and the chiming of the bells!

III

Hear the loud alarum bells—
 Brazen bells!
What a tale of terror, now, their turbulency tells

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In the startled ear of night
How they scream out their affright!
Too much horrified to speak,
They can only shriek, shriek,
Out of tune,
In a clamorous appealing to the mercy of the fire,
In a mad exostulation with the deaf and frantic fire.
Leaping higher, higher, higher,
With a desperate desire,
And a resolute endeavor
Now, now to sit, or never,
By the side of the pale-faced moon.
Oh, the bells, bells, bells!
What a tale their terror tells
Of despair!
How they clang, and clash, and roar!
What a horror they outpour
On the bosom of the palpitating air!
Yet the ear it fully knows,
By the twanging,
And the clanging,
How the danger ebbs and flows;
Yet the ear distinctly tells,
In the jangling,
And the wrangling,
How the danger sinks and swells,
By the sinking or the swelling in the anger of the bells;
Of the bells—
Of the bells, bells, bells, bells,
Bells, bells, bells—
In the clamor and the clangor of the bells!

IV

Hear the tolling of the bells,
Iron bells!
What a world of solemn thought their melody compels!
In the silence of the night,
How we shiver with affright
At the melancholy menace of their tone!

For every sound that floats
From the rust within their throats,
Is a groan.
And the people—ah, the people,
They that dwell up in the steeple,
All alone.
And who tolling, tolling, tolling,
In that muffled monotone,
Feel a glory in so rolling
On the human heart a stone—
They are neither man nor woman,
They are neither brute nor human,
They are ghouls:
And their king it is who tolls;
And he rolls, rolls, rolls,
Rolls
A pæan from the bells!
And his merry bosom swells
With the pæan of the bells!
And he dances, and he yells;
Keeping time, time, time,
In a sort of Runic rhyme,
To the pæan of the bells,
Of the bells;
Keeping time, time, time,
In a sort of Runic rhyme,
To the throbbing of the bells;
Of the bells, bells, bells—
To the sobbing of the bells;
Keeping time, time, time,
As he knells, knells, knells,
In a happy Runic rhyme,
To the rolling of the bells;
Of the bells, bells, bells—
To the tolling of the bells,
Of the bells, bells, bells, bells,
Bells, bells, bells—
To the moaning and the groaning of the bells.

Edgar Allan Poe [1809-1849]

THE LOTOS-EATERS

"COURAGE!" he said, and pointed toward the land,
 "This mounting wave will roll us shoreward soon."

In the afternoon they came unto a land

In which it seemèd always afternoon.

All round the coast the languid air did swoon,

Breathing like one that hath a weary dream.

Full-faced above the valley stood the moon;

And, like a downward smoke, the slender stream

Along the cliff to fall and pause and fall did seem.

A land of streams! some, like a downward smoke,

Slow-dropping veils of thinnest lawn, did go;

And some through wavering lights and shadows broke,

Rolling a slumberous sheet of foam below.

They saw the gleaming river seaward flow

From the inner land: far off, three mountain-tops,

Three silent pinnacles of agèd snow,

Stood sunset-flushed; and, dewed with showery drops,

Up-clomb the shadowy pine above the woven copse.

The charmèd sunset lingered low adown

In the red West: through mountain clefts the dale

Was seen far inland, and the yellow down

Bordered with palm, and many a winding vale

And meadow, set with slender galingale;

A land where all things always seemed the same!

And round about the keel with faces pale,

Dark faces pale against that rosy flame,

The mild-eyed melancholy Lotos-eaters came.

Branches they bore of that enchanted stem,

Laden with flower and fruit, whereof they gave

To each, but whoso did receive of them

And taste, to him the gushing of the wave

Far, far away did seem to mourn and rave

On alien shores; and if his fellow spake,

His voice was thin, as voices from the grave;

And deep-asleep he seemed, yet all awake,

And music in his ears his beating heart did make.

They sat them down upon the yellow sand,
Between the sun and moon upon the shore;
And sweet it was to dream of Fatherland,
Of child, and wife, and slave; but evermore
Most weary seemed the sea, weary the oar,
Weary the wandering fields of barren foam.
Then some one said, "We will return no more;"
And all at once they sang, "Our island home
Is far beyond the wave; we will no longer roam."

Alfred Tennyson [1809-1892]

ULYSSES

It little profits that an idle king,
By this still hearth, among these barren crags,
Matched with an aged wife, I mete and dole
Unequal laws unto a savage race,
That hoard, and sleep, and feed, and know not me.
I cannot rest from travel: I will drink
Life to the lees. All times I have enjoyed
Greatly, have suffered greatly, both with those
That loved me, and alone; on shore, and when
Through scudding drifts the rainy Hyades
Vexed the dim sea. I am become a name;
For always roaming with a hungry heart
Much have I seen and known,—cities of men
And manners, climates, councils, governments,
Myself not least, but honored of them all;
And drunk delight of battle with my peers,
Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy.
I am part of all that I have met;
Yet all experience is an arch wherethrough
Gleams that untravelled world, whose margin fades
For ever and for ever when I move.
How dull it is to pause, to make an end,
To rust unburnished, not to shine in use!
As though to breathe were life. Life piled on life
Were all too little, and of one to me
Little remains: but every hour is saved

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From that eternal silence, something more,
A bringer of new things; and vile it were
For some three suns to store and hoard myself,
And this gray spirit yearning in desire
To follow knowledge like a sinking star,
Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.

This is my son, mine own Telemachus,
To whom I leave the sceptre and the isle—
Well-loved of me, discerning to fulfil
This labor, by slow prudence to make mild
A rugged people, and through soft degrees
Subdue them to the useful and the good.
Most blameless is he, centred in the sphere
Of common duties, decent not to fail
In offices of tenderness, and pay
Meet adoration to my household gods,
When I am gone. He works his work, I mine.

There lies the port; the vessel puffs her sail:
There gloom the dark, broad seas. My mariners,
Souls that have toiled, and wrought, and thought with me—
That ever with a frolic welcome took
The thunder and the sunshine, and opposed
Free hearts, free foreheads—you and I are old;
Old age hath yet his honor and his toil;
Death closes all: but something ere the end,
Some work of noble note, may yet be done,
Not unbecoming men that strove with gods.
The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks:
The long day wanes: the slow moon climbs: the deep
Moans round with many voices. Come, my friends,
'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.
Push off, and sitting well in order smite
The sounding furrows; for my purpose holds
To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths
Of all the western stars, until I die.
It may be that the gulfs will wash us down:
It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,
And see the great Achilles, whom we knew.
Though much is taken, much abides; and though
We are not now that strength which in old days

Moved earth and heaven; that which we are, we are;—
One equal temper of heroic hearts,
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

Alfred Tennyson [1809-1892]

MORTE D'ARTHUR

So all day long the noise of battle rolled
Among the mountains by the winter sea;
Until King Arthur's table, man by man,
Had fallen in Lyonesse about their Lord,
King Arthur: then, because his wound was deep,
The bold Sir Bedivere uplifted him,
Sir Bedivere, the last of all his knights,
And bore him to a chapel nigh the field,
A broken chancel with a broken cross,
That stood on a dark strait of barren land.
On one side lay the ocean, and on one
Lay a great water, and the moon was full.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere:
"The sequel of to-day unsolders all
The goodliest fellowship of famous knights
Whereof this world holds record. Such a sleep
They sleep—the men I loved. I think that we
Shall never more, at any future time,
Delight our souls with talk of knightly deeds,
Walking about the gardens and the halls
Of Camelot, as in the days that were.
I perish by this people which I made,—
Though Merlin sware that I should come again
To rule once more—but let what will be, be,
I am so deeply smitten through the helm,
That without help I cannot last till morn.
Thou therefore take my brand Excalibur,
Which was my pride: for thou rememberest how
In those old days, one summer noon, an arm
Rose up from out the bosom of the lake,
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
Holding the sword—and how I rowed across
And took it, and have worn it, like a king:

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And, wheresoever I am sung or told
In after time, this also shall be known:
But now delay not: take Excalibur,
And fling him far into the middle mere:
Watch what thou seest, and lightly bring me word."

To him replied the bold Sir Bedivere:
"It is not meet, Sir King, to leave thee thus,
Aidless, alone, and smitten through the helm.
A little thing may harm a wounded man.
Yet I thy hest will all perform at full,
Watch what I see, and lightly bring thee word."

So saying, from the ruined shrine he stepped
And in the moon athwart the place of tombs,
Where lay the mighty bones of ancient men,
Old knights, and over them the sea-wind sang
Shrill, chill, with flakes of foam. He, stepping down
By zigzag paths, and juts of pointed rock,
Came on the shining levels of the lake.

There drew he forth the brand Excalibur,
And o'er him, drawing it, the winter moon,
Brightening the skirts of a long cloud, ran forth
And sparkled keen with frost against the hilt:
For all the haft twinkled with diamond sparks,
Myriads of topaz-lights, and jacinth-work
Of subtlest jewelery. He gazed so long
That both his eyes were dazzled, as he stood,
This way and that dividing the swift mind,
In act to throw: but at the last it seemed
Better to leave Excalibur concealed
There in the many-knotted water-flags,
That whistled stiff and dry about the marge.
So strode he back slow to the wounded king.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere:
"Hast thou performed my mission which I gave?
What is it thou hast seen? or what hast heard?"

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:
"I heard the ripple washing in the reeds,
And the wild water lapping on the crag."

To whom replied King Arthur, faint and pale:
"Thou hast betrayed thy nature and thy name,

Not rendering true answer, as beseemed
Thy fealty, nor like a noble knight:
For surer sign had followed, either hand,
Or voice, or else a motion of the mere.
This is a shameful thing for men to lie.
Yet now, I charge thee, quickly go again
As thou art lief and dear, and do the thing
I bade thee, watch, and lightly bring me word."

Then went Sir Bedivere the second time
Across the ridge, and paced beside the mere,
Counting the dewy pebbles, fixed in thought;
But when he saw the wonder of the hilt,
How curiously and strangely chased, he smote
His palms together, and he cried aloud,
"And if indeed I cast the brand away,
Surely a precious thing, one worthy note,
Should thus be lost forever from the earth,
Which might have pleased the eyes of many men.
What good should follow this, if this were done?
What harm, undone? deep harm to disobey,
Seeing obedience is the bond of rule.
Were it well to obey then, if a king demand
An act unprofitable, against himself?
The king is sick, and knows not what he does.
What record, or what relic of my lord
Should be to aftertime, but empty breath
And rumors of a doubt? but were this kept,
Stored in some treasure-house of mighty kings,
Some one might show it at a joust of arms,
Saying, 'King Arthur's sword, Excalibur,
Wrought by the lonely maiden of the lake;
Nine years she wrought it, sitting in the deeps
Upon the hidden bases of the hills.'
So might some old man speak in the aftertime
To all the people, winning reverence;
But now much honor and much fame were lost."

So spake he, clouded with his own conceit,
And hid Excalibur, the second time,
And so strode back slow to the wounded king.
Then spoke King Arthur, breathing heavily:

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“What is it thou hast seen? or what hast heard?”

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:

“I heard the water lapping on the crag
And the long ripple washing in the reeds.”

To whom replied King Arthur, much in wrath:

“Ah, miserable and unkind, untrue,
Unknightly, traitor-hearted! Woe is me!
Authority forgets a dying king,
Laid widowed of the power in his eye
That bowed the will. I see thee what thou art,
For thou, the latest-left of all my knights,
In whom should meet the offices of all,
Thou would'st betray me for the precious hilt;
Either from lust of gold, or like a girl
Valuing the giddy pleasure of the eyes.
Yet, for a man may fail in duty twice,
And the third time may prosper, get thee hence:
But, if thou spare to fling Excalibur,
I will arise and slay thee with my hands.”

Then quickly rose Sir Bedivere, and ran,
And, leaping down the ridges lightly, plunged
Among the bulrush-beds, and clutched the sword,
And strongly wheeled and threw it. The great brand
Made lightnings in the splendor of the moon,
And flashing round and round, and whirled in an arch,
Shot like a streamer of the northern morn,
Seen where the moving isles of winter shock
By night, with noises of the northern sea.
So flashed and fell the brand Excalibur:
But ere he dipped the surface, rose an arm,
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
And caught him by the hilt, and brandished him
Three times, and drew him under in the mere.
And lightly went the other to the king.

Then spoke King Arthur, drawing thicker breath:

“Now see I by thine eyes that this is done.
Speak out: what is it thou hast heard, or seen?”

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:

“Sir King, I closed mine eyelids, lest the gems
Should blind my purpose, for I never saw,

Nor shall see, here or elsewhere, till I die,
Not though I live three lives of mortal men,
So great a miracle as yonder hilt.
Then with both hands I flung him, wheeling him;
But when I looked again, behold an arm,
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
That caught him by the hilt, and brandished him
Three times, and drew him under in the mere."

And answer made King Arthur, breathing hard:
"My end draws nigh; 'tis time that I were gone.
Make broad thy shoulders to receive my weight,
And bear me to the margin; yet I fear
My wound hath taken cold, and I shall die."

So saying, from the pavement he half rose,
Slowly, with pain, reclining on his arm,
And looking wistfully with wide blue eyes
As in a picture. Him Sir Bedivere
Remorsefully regarded through his tears,
And would have spoken, but he found not words,
Then took with care, and kneeling on one knee,
O'er both his shoulders drew the languid hands,
And rising bore him through the place of tombs.

But, as he walked, King Arthur panted hard,
Like one that feels a nightmare on his bed
When all the house is mute. So sighed the king,
Muttering and murmuring at his ear, "Quick, quick!
I fear it is too late, and I shall die."

But the other swiftly strode from ridge to ridge,
Clothed with his breath, and looking, as he walked,
Larger than human on the frozen hills.
He heard the deep behind him, and a cry
Before. His own thought drove him like a goad.
Dry clashed his harness in the icy caves
And barren chasms, and all to left and right
The bare black cliff clanged round him, as he based
His feet on juts of slippery crag that rang
Sharp-smitten with the dint of armed heels—
And on a sudden, lo! the level lake,
And the long glories of the winter moon.

Then saw they how there hove a dusky barge,

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Dark as a funeral scarf from stem to stern,
Beneath them; and descending they were ware
That all the decks were dense with stately forms
Black-stoled, black-hooded, like a dream—by these
Three queens with crowns of gold—and from them rose
A cry that shivered to the tingling stars,
And, as it were one voice, an agony
Of lamentation, like a wind, that shrills
All night in a waste land, where no one comes,
Or hath come, since the making of the world.

Then murmured Arthur, "Place me in the barge,"
And to the barge they came. There those three queens
Put forth their hands, and took the king, and wept.
But she that rose the tallest of them all
And fairest, laid his head upon her lap,
And loosed the shattered casque, and chafed his hands,
And called him by his name, complaining loud,
And dropping bitter tears against his brow
Striped with dark blood: for all his face was white
And colorless, and like the withered moon
Smote by the fresh beam of the springing east;
And all his greaves and cuisses dashed with drops
Of onset; and the light and lustrous curls—
That made his forehead like a rising sun
High from the dais-throne—were parched with dust;
Or, clotted into points and hanging loose,
Mixed with the knightly growth that fringed his lips.
So like a shattered column lay the king;
Not like that Arthur who, with lance in rest,
From spur to plume a star of tournament,
Shot through the lists at Camelot, and charged
Before the eyes of ladies and of kings.

Then loudly cried the bold Sir Bedivere:
"Ah! my Lord Arthur, whither shall I go?
Where shall I hide my forehead and my eyes?
For now I see the true old times are dead,
When every morning brought a noble chance,
And every chance brought out a noble knight.
Such times have been not since the light that led
The holy Elders with the gift of myrrh.

But now the whole ROUND TABLE is dissolved
Which was an image of the mighty world;
And I, the last, go forth companionless,
And the days darken round me, and the years,
Among new men, strange faces, other minds."

And slowly answered Arthur from the barge:
"The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
And God fulfils Himself in many ways,
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.
Comfort thyself: what comfort is in me?
I have lived my life, and that which I have done
May He within Himself make pure! but thou,
If thou shouldst never see my face again,
Pray for my soul. More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of. Wherefore, let thy voice
Rise like a fountain for me night and day.
For what are men better than sheep or goats
That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
Both for themselves and those who call them friend?
For so the whole round earth is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.
But now farewell. I am going a long way
With these thou seest—if indeed I go—
For all my mind is clouded with a doubt—
To the island-valley of Avilion;
Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,
Nor ever wind blows loudly; but it lies
Deep-meadowed, happy, fair with orchard-lawns
And bowery hollows crowned with summer sea,
Where I will heal me of my grievous wound."

So said he, and the barge with oar and sail
Moved from the brink, like some full-breasted swan
That, fluting a wild carol ere her death,
Ruffles her pure cold plume, and takes the flood
With swarthy webs. Long stood Sir Bedivere
Revolving many memories, till the hull
Looked one black dot against the verge of dawn,
And on the mere the wailing died away.

Alfred Tennyson [1809-1892]

THE LADY OF SHALOTT

PART I

ON either side the river lie
 Long fields of barley and of rye,
 That clothe the wold and meet the sky;
 And through the field the road runs by
 To many-towered Camelot;
 And up and down the people go,
 Gazing where the lilies blow
 Round an island there below,
 The island of Shalott.

Willows whiten, aspens quiver,
 Little breezes dusk and shiver
 Through the wave that runs for ever
 By the island in the river
 Flowing down to Camelot.
 Four gray walls, and four gray towers,
 Overlook a space of flowers,
 And the silent isle embowers
 The Lady of Shalott.

By the margin, willow-veiled,
 Slide the heavy barges trailed
 By slow horses; and unhailed
 The shallop flitteth silken-sailed
 Skimming down to Camelot:
 But who hath seen her wave her hand?
 Or at the casement seen her stand?
 Or is she known in all the land,
 The Lady of Shalott?

Only reapers, reaping early
 In among the bearded barley,
 Hear a song that echoes cheerly
 From the river winding clearly,
 Down to towered Camelot:

And by the moon the reaper weary,
Piling sheaves in uplands airy,
Listening, whispers "'Tis the fairy
Lady of Shalott."

PART II

There she weaves by night and day
A magic web with colors gay.
She has heard a whisper say,
A curse is on her if she stay
 To look down to Camelot.
She knows not what the curse may be,
And so she weaveth steadily,
And little other care hath she,
 The Lady of Shalott.

And moving through a mirror clear
That hangs before her all the year,
Shadows of the world appear.
There she sees the highway near
 Winding down to Camelot:
There the river eddy whirls,
And there the surly village-churls,
And the red cloaks of market girls,
 Pass onward from Shalott.

Sometimes a troop of damsels glad,
An abbot on an ambling pad,
Sometimes a curly shepherd-lad,
Or long-haired page in crimson clad,
 Goes by to towered Camelot;
And sometimes through the mirror blue
The knights come riding two and two:
She hath no loyal knight and true,
 The Lady of Shalott.

But in her web she still delights
To weave the mirror's magic sights,
For often through the silent nights
A funeral, with plumes and lights
 And music, went to Camelot:

Or when the moon was overhead,
 Came two young lovers lately wed;
 "I am half sick of shadows," said
 The Lady of Shalott.

PART III

A bow-shot from her bower-eaves,
 He rode between the barley-sheaves,
 The sun came dazling through the leaves,
 And flamed upon the brazen greaves
 Of bold Sir Lancelot.

A red-cross knight for ever kneeled
 To a lady in his shield,
 That sparkled on the yellow field,
 Beside remote Shalott.

The gemmy bridle glittered free,
 Like to some branch of stars we see
 Hung in the golden Galaxy.
 The bridle bells rang merrily
 As he rode down to Camelot;
 And from his blazoned baldric slung
 A mighty silver bugle hung,
 And as he rode his armor rung,
 Beside remote Shalott.

All in the blue unclouded weather
 Thick-jeweled shone the saddle-leather,
 The helmet and the helmet-feather
 Burned like one burning flame together,
 As he rode down to Camelot;
 As often through the purple night,
 Below the starry clusters bright,
 Some bearded meteor, trailing light,
 Moves over still Shalott.

His broad clear brow in sunlight glowed;
 On burnished hooves his war-horse trode;
 From underneath his helmet flowed
 His coal-black curls as on he rode,
 As he rode down to Camelot.

From the bank and from the river
He flashed into the crystal mirror,
"Tirra lirra," by the river
Sang Sir Lancelot.

She left the web, she left the loom,
She made three paces through the room,
She saw the water-lily bloom,
She saw the helmet and the plume,
She looked down to Camelot.
Out flew the web and floated wide;
The mirror cracked from side to side;
"The curse is come upon me!" cried
The Lady of Shalott.

PART IV

In the stormy east-wind straining,
The pale yellow woods were waning,
The broad stream in his banks complaining,
Heavily the low sky raining
Over towered Camelot;
Down she came and found a boat
Beneath a willow left afloat,
And round about the prow she wrote
The Lady of Shalott.

And down the river's dim expanse—
Like some bold seer in a trance,
Seeing all his own mischance—
With a glassy countenance
Did she look to Camelot.
And at the closing of the day
She loosed the chain, and down she lay;
The broad stream bore her far away,
The Lady of Shalott.

Lying, robed in snowy white
That loosely flew to left and right—
The leaves upon her falling light—
Through the noises of the night
She floated down to Camelot:

3006 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

And as the boat-head wound along
The willowy hills and fields among,
They heard her singing her last song,
The Lady of Shalott.

Heard a carol, mournful, holy,
Chanted loudly, chanted lowly,
Till her blood was frozen slowly,
And her eyes were darkened wholly,
Turned to towered Camelot;
For ere she reached upon the tide
The first house by the water-side,
Singing in her song she died,
The Lady of Shalott.

Under tower and balcony,
By garden-wall and gallery,
A gleaming shape she floated by,
Dead-pale between the houses high,
Silent into Camelot.

Out upon the wharfs they came,
Knight and burgher, lord and dame,
And round the prow they read her name,
The Lady of Shalott.

Who is this? and what is here?
And in the lighted palace near
Died the sound of royal cheer;
And they crossed themselves for fear,
All the knights at Camelot:
But Lancelot mused a little space;
He said, "She has a lovely face;
God in His mercy lend her grace,
The Lady of Shalott."

Alfred Tennyson [1809-1892]

SONG

From "Paracelsus"

OVER the sea our galleys went,
With cleaving prows in order brave
To a speeding wind and a bounding wave—
A gallant armament:

Each bark built out of a forest-tree
Left leafy and rough as first it grew,
And nailed all over the gaping sides,
Within and without, with black bull-hides,
Seethed in fat and suppled in flame,
To bear the playful billows' game;
So, each good ship was rude to see,
Rude and bare to the outward view,

But each upbore a stately tent
Where cedar pales in scented row
Kept out the flakes of the dancing brine,
And an awning drooped the mast below,
In fold on fold of the purple fine,
That neither noontide nor star-shine
Nor moonlight cold which maketh mad,

Might pierce the regal tenement.
When the sun dawned, oh, gay and glad
We set the sail and plied the oar;
But when the night-wind blew like breath,
For joy of one day's voyage more,
We sang together on the wide sea,
Like men at peace on a peaceful shore;
Each sail was loosed to the wind so free,
Each helm made sure by the twilight star,
And in a sleep as calm as death,

We, the voyagers from afar,
Lay stretched along, each weary crew
In a circle round its wondrous tent
Whence gleamed soft light and curled rich scent,

And with light and perfume, music too:
So the stars wheeled round, and the darkness passed,
And at morn we started beside the mast,
And still each ship was sailing fast!

Now, one morn, land appeared—a speck
Dim trembling betwixt sea and sky:
“Avoid it,” cried our pilot, “check
The shout, restrain the eager eye!”
But the heaving sea was black behind
For many a night and many a day,

And land, though but a rock, drew nigh;
 So we broke the cedar pales away,
 Let the purple awning flap in the wind,
 And a statue bright was on every deck!
 We shouted, every man of us,
 And steered right into the harbor thus,
 With pomp and pæan glorious.

A hundred shapes of lucid stone!
 All day we built its shrine for each,
 A shrine of rock for every one,
 Nor paused till in the westering sun
 We sat together on the beach
 To sing because our task was done;
 When lo! what shouts and merry songs!
 What laughter all the distance stirs!
 A loaded raft with happy throngs
 Of gentle islanders!
 "Our isles are just at hand," they cried,
 "Like cloudlets faint in even sleeping;
 Our temple-gates are opened wide,
 Our olive-groves thick shade are keeping
 For these majestic forms"—they cried.
 Oh, then we awoke with sudden start
 From our deep dream, and knew, too late,
 How bare the rock, how desolate,
 Which had received our precious freight:
 Yet we called out—"Depart!
 Our gifts, once given, must here abide:
 Our work is done; we have no heart
 To mar our work,"—we cried.

Robert Browning [1812-1889]

THE SWIMMERS

WE were eight fishers of the western sea,
 Who sailed our craft beside a barren land,
 Where harsh with pines the herdless mountains stand
 And lonely beaches be.

There no man dwells, and ships go seldom past;
Yet sometimes there we lift our keels ashore,
To rest in safety 'mid the broken roar
And mist of surges vast.

One strand we know, remote from all the rest,
For north and south the cliffs are high and steep,
Whose naked leagues of rock repel the deep,
Insurgent from the west.

Tawny it lies, untrodden o'er by man,
Save when from storm we sought its narrow rift
To beach our craft and light a fire of drift
And sleep till day began.

Along its sands no flower nor bird has home.
Abrupt its breast, girt by no splendor save
The whorled and poisoning emerald of the wave
And scarves of rustling foam—

A place of solemn beauty; yet we swore,
By all the ocean stars' unhasting flight,
To seek no refuge for another night
Upon that haunted shore.

That year a sombre autumn held the earth.
At dawn we sailed from out our village bay;
We sang; a taut wind leapt along the day;
The sea-birds mocked our mirth.

Southwest we drave, like arrows to a mark;
Ere set of sun the coast was far to lee,
Where thundered over by the white-hooved sea
The reefs lie gaunt and dark.

But when we would have cast our hooks, the main
Grew wroth a-sudden, and our captain said:
"Seek we a shelter." And the west was red
God gave his winds the rein.

3010 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

And eastward lay the sands of which I told;
Thither we fled, and on the narrow beach
Drew up our keels beyond the lessening reach
Of waters green and cold.

Then set the wounded sun. The wind blew clean
The skies. A wincing star came forth at last.
We heard like mighty tollings in the blast
The shock of waves unseen.

The wide-winged Eagle hovered overhead;
The Scorpion crept slowly in the south
To pits below the horizon; in its mouth
Lay a young moon that bled,

And from our fire the ravished flame swept back,
Like yellow hair of one who flies apace,
Compelled in lands barbarian to race
With lions on her track.

Then from the maelstroms of the surf arose
Wild laughter, mystical, and up the sands
Came Two that walked with intertwining hands
Amid those ocean snows.

Ghostly they gleamed before the lofty spray—
Fairer than gods and naked as the moon,
The foamy fillets at their ankles strewn
Less marble-white than they.

Laughing they stood, then to our beacon's flare
Drew nearer, as we watched in mad surprise
The scarlet-flashing lips, the sea-green eyes,
The red and tangled hair.

Then spoke the god (goddess and god they seemed),
In harp-like accents of a tongue unknown—
About his brows the dripping locks were blown;
Like wannest gold he gleamed.

Staring we sat; again the Vision spoke.
Beyond his form we saw the billows rave,—
The leap of those white leopards in the wave,—
The spume of seas that broke.

Yet sat we mute, for then a human word
Seemed folly's worst. And scorn began to trace
Its presence on the wild, imperious face;
Again the red lips stirred,

But spoke not. In an instant we were free
From that enchantment: fleet as deer they turned
And sudden amber leapt the sands they spurned;
We saw them meet the sea.

We heard the seven-chorded surf, unquelled,
Call in one thunder to the granite walls;
But over all, like broken clarion-calls,
Disdainful laughter welled.

Then silence, save for cloven wave and wind,
Our fire had faltered on its little dune.
Far out a fog-wall reared, and hid the moon.
The night lay vast and blind.

Silent, we waited the assuring morn,
Which rose on angered waters. But we set
Our hooded prows to sea, and, tempest-wet,
Beat up the coast forlorn.

And no man scorned our tale, for well they knew
Had mystery befallen: in our eyes
Were alien terrors and unknown surmise.
Men saw the tale was true.

And no man seeks a refuge on that shore,
Though tempests gather in impelling skies; .
Unseen, unsolved, unhazarded it lies,
Forsaken evermore.

3012 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

For on those sands immaculate and lone
Perchance They list the sea's immeasured lyre,
When sunset casts an evanescent fire
Through billows thunder-sown.

George Sterling [1869—

THE BLESSED DAMOZEL

THE blessed damozel leaned out
From the gold bar of Heaven;
Her eyes were deeper than the depth
Of waters stilled at even;
She had three lilies in her hand,
And the stars in her hair were seven.

Her robe, ungirt from clasp to hem,
No wrought flowers did adorn,
But a white rose of Mary's gift,
For service sweetly worn;
Her hair that lay along her back
Was yellow like ripe corn.

Herseemed she scarce had been a day
One of God's choristers;
The wonder was not yet quite gone
From that still look of hers;
Albeit, to them she left, her day
Had counted as ten years.

(To one, it is ten years of years.
. . . Yet now, and in this place,
Surely she leaned o'er me—her hair
Fell all about my face. . . .
Nothing: the autumn fall of leaves.
The whole year sets apace.)

It was the rampart of God's house
That she was standing on;
By God built over the sheer depth
The which is Space begun;
So high, that looking downward thence
She scarce could see the sun.

It lies in Heaven, across the flood
Of ether, as a bridge.
Beneath, the tides of day and night
With flame and darkness ridge
The void, as low as where this earth
Spins like a fretful midge.

Around her, lovers, newly met
'Mid deathless love's acclaims,
Spoke evermore among themselves
Their heart-remembered names;
And the souls mounting up to God
Went by her like thin flames.

And still she bowed herself and stooped
Out of the circling charm;
Until her bosom must have made
The bar she leaned on warm,
And the lilies lay as if asleep
Along her bended arm.

From the fixed place of Heaven she saw
Time like a pulse shake fierce
Through all the worlds. Her gaze still strove
Within the gulf to pierce
Its path; and now she spoke as when
The stars sang in their spheres.

The sun was gone now; the curled moon
Was like a little feather
Fluttering far down the gulf; and now
She spoke through the still weather.
Her voice was like the voice the stars
Had when they sang together.

(Ah sweet! Even now, in that bird's song,
Strove not her accents there,
Fain to be hearkened? When those bells
Possessed the mid-day air,
Strove not her steps to reach my side
Down all the echoing stair?)

"I wish that he were come to me,
 For he will come," she said.
 "Have not I prayed in Heaven?—on earth,
 Lord, Lord, has he not prayed?
 Are not two prayers a perfect strength?
 And shall I feel afraid?"

"When round his head the aureole clings,
 And he is clothed in white,
 I'll take his hand and go with him
 To the deep wells of light;
 As unto a stream we will step down,
 And bathe there in God's sight.

"We two will stand beside that shrine,
 Occult, withheld, untrod,
 Whose lamps are stirred continually
 With prayer sent up to God;
 And see our old prayers, granted, melt
 Each like a little cloud.

"We two will lie i' the shadow of
 That living mystic tree
 Within whose secret growth the Dove
 Is sometimes felt to be,
 While every leaf that His plumes touch
 Saith His Name audibly.

"And I myself will teach to him,
 I myself, lying so,
 The songs I sing here; which his voice
 Shall pause in, hushed and slow,
 And find some knowledge at each pause,
 Or some new thing to know."

(Alas! we two, we two, thou say'st!
 Yea, one wast thou with me
 That once of old. But shall God lift
 To endless unity
 The soul whose likeness with thy soul
 Was but its love for thee?)

"We two," she said, "will seek the groves
Where the lady Mary is,
With her five handmaidens, whose names
Are five sweet symphonies,
Cecily, Gertrude, Magdalen,
Margaret and Rosalys.

"Circlewise sit they, with bound locks
And foreheads garlanded;
Into the fine cloth white like flame
Weaving the golden thread,
To fashion the birth-robcs for them
Who are just born, being dead.

"He shall fear, haply, and be dumb:
Then will I lay my cheek
To his, and tell about our love,
Not once abashed or weak:
And the dear Mother will approve
My pride, and let me speak.

"Herself shall bring us, hand in hand,
To Him round whom all souls
Kneel, the clear-ranged unnumbered heads
Bowed with their aureoles:
And angels meeting us shall sing
To their citherns and citoles.

"There will I ask of Christ the Lord
Thus much for him and me:—
Only to live as once on earth
With Love, only to be,
As then awhile, for ever now
Together, I and he."

She gazed and listened and then said,
Less sad of speech than mild,—
"All this is when he comes." She ceased.
The light thrilled towards her, filled
With angels in strong level flight.
Her eyes prayed, and she smiled.

(I saw her smile.) But soon their path
 Was vague in distant spheres:
 And then she cast her arms along
 The golden barriers,
 And laid her face between her hands,
 And wept. (I heard her tears.)

Dante Gabriel Rossetti [1828-1882]

A SONG OF ANGIOLA IN HEAVEN

FLOWERS,—that have died upon my Sweet,
 Lulled by the rhythmic dancing beat
 Of her young bosom under you,—
 Now will I show you such a thing
 As never, through thick buds of Spring,
 Betwixt the daylight and the dew,
 The Bird whose being no man knows—
 The voice that waketh all night through,
 Tells to the Rose.

For lo,—a garden-place I found,
 Well filled of leaves, and stilled of sound,
 Well flowered, with red fruit marvelous;
 And 'twixt the shining trunks would flit
 Tall knights and silken maids, or sit
 With faces bent and amorous;—
 There, in the heart thereof, and crowned
 With woodbine and amaracus,
 My Love I found.

Alone she walked,—ah, well I wis,
 My heart leapt up for joy of this!—
 Then when I called to her her name,—
 The name, that like a pleasant thing
 Men's lips remember, murmuring,—
 At once across the sward she came,—
 Full fain she seemed, my own dear maid,
 And askèd ever as she came,
 "Where hast thou stayed?"

A Song of Angiola in Heaven 3017

"Where hast thou stayed?" she asked, as though
The long years were an hour ago;
 But I spake not, nor answerèd,
For, looking in her eyes, I saw
A light not lit of mortal law;
 And in her clear cheek's changeless red,
And sweet, unshaken speaking found
 That in this place the Hours were dead,
 And Time was bound.

"This is well done," she said, "in thee,
O Love, that thou art come to me,
 To this green garden glorious;
Now truly shall our life be sped
In joyance and all goodlihed,
 For here all things are fair to us,
And none with burden is oppressed,
 And none is poor or piteous,—
 For here is Rest.

"No formless Future blurs the sky;
Men mourn not here, with dull dead eye,
 By shrouded shapes of Yesterday;
Betwixt the Coming and the Past
The flawless life hangs fixen fast
 In one unwearying To-Day,
That darkens not; for Sin is shriven,
 Death from the doors is thrust away,
 And here is Heaven."

At "Heaven" she ceased;—and lifted up
Her fair head like a flower-cup,
 With rounded mouth, and eyes aglow;
Then set I lips to hers, and felt,—
Ah, God,—the hard pain fade and melt,
 And past things change to painted show;
The song of quiring birds outbroke;
 The lit leaves laughed—sky shook, and lo,
 I swooned,—and woke.

And now, O Flowers,
 —Ye that indeed are dead,—

Now for all waiting hours,
 Well am I comforted;
 For of a surety, now, I see,
 That, without dim distress
 Of tears, or weariness,
 My Lady, verily, awaiteth me;
 So that until with Her I be,
 For my dear Lady's sake
 I am right fain to make
 Out from my pain a pillow, and to take
 Grief for a golden garment unto me;
 Knowing that I, at last, shall stand
 In that green garden-land,
 And, in the holding of my dear Love's hand,
 Forget the grieving and the misery.

Austin Dobson [1840—

THE HOUND OF HEAVEN

I FLED Him, down the nights and down the days;
 I fled Him, down the arches of the years;
 I fled Him, down the labyrinthine ways
 Of my own mind; and in the midst of tears
 I hid from Him, and under running laughter.
 Up vistaed hopes I sped;
 And shot, precipitated
 Adown Titanic glooms of chasmed fears,
 From those strong Feet that followed, followed after.
 But with unhurrying chase,
 And unperturbèd pace,
 Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,
 They beat—and a Voice beat
 More instant than the Feet—
 "All things betray thee, who betrayest Me."

I pleaded, outlaw-wise,
 By many a hearted casement, curtained red,
 Trellised with intertwining charities;
 (For, though I knew His love Who followèd,
 Yet was I sore adread

Lest, having Him, I must have naught beside);
But, if one little casement parted wide,
The gust of His approach would clash it to.
Fear wist not to evade, as Love wist to pursue.
Across the margent of the world I fled,
And troubled the gold gateways of the stars,
Smiting for shelter on their clangèd bars;
Fretted to dulcet jars
And silvern chatter the pale ports o' the moon.
I said to dawn, Be sudden; to eve, Be soon;
With thy young skiey blossoms heap me over
From this tremendous Lover!
Float thy vague veil about me, lest He see!
I tempted all His servitors, but to find
My own betrayal in their constancy,
In faith to Him their fickleness to me,
'Their traitorous trueness, and their loyal deceit.
To all swift things for swiftness did I sue;
Clung to the whistling mane of every wind.
But whether they swept, smoothly fleet,
The long savannahs of the blue;
Or whether, Thunder-driven,
They clangèd his chariot 'thwart a heaven
Plashy with flying lightnings round the spurn o' their feet:—
Fear wist not to evade, as Love wist to pursue.
Still with unhurrying chase,
And unperturbèd pace,
Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,
Came on the following Feet,
And a Voice above their beat—
"Naught shelters thee, who wilt not shelter Me."

I sought no more that after which I strayed
In face of man or maid;
But still within the little children's eyes
Seems something, something that replies;
They at least are for me, surely for me!
I turned me to them very wistfully;
But, just as their young eyes grew sudden fair
With dawning answers there,

3020 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

Their angel plucked them from me by the hair.
 "Come then, ye other children, Nature's—share
 With me" (said I) "your delicate fellowship;

Let me greet you lip to lip,

Let me twine you with caresses,

Wantoning

With our Lady-Mother's vagrant tresses,

Banqueting

With her in her wind-walled palace,

Underneath her azure daïs,

Quaffing, as your taintless way is,

From a chalice

Lucent-weeping out of the dayspring."

So it was done:

I in their delicate fellowship was one—

Drew the bolt of Nature's secrecies.

I knew all the swift importings

On the wilful face of skies,

I knew how the clouds arise

Spumèd of the wild sea-snortings;

All that's born or dies

Rose and drooped with—made them shapers

Of mine own moods, or wailful or divine—

With them joyed and was bereaven.

I was heavy with the even,

When she lit her glimmering tapers

Round the day's dead sanctities.

I laughed in the morning's eyes.

I triumphed and I saddened with all weather,

Heaven and I wept together,

And its sweet tears were salt with mortal mine;

Against the red throb of its sunset-heart

I laid my own to beat,

And share commingling heat;

But not by that, by that, was eased my human smart.

In vain my tears were wet on Heaven's gray cheek.

For ah! we know not what each other says,

These things and I; in sound *I* speak—

Their sound is but their stir, they speak by silences.

Nature, poor stepdame, cannot slake my drouth;

Let her, if she would owe me,
Drop yon blue bosom-veil of sky, and show me
The breasts o' her tenderness:
Never did any milk of hers once bless
My thirsting mouth.
Nigh and dry draws the chase,
With unperturbèd pace,
Deliberate speed, majestic instancy;
And past those noisèd Feet
A voice comes yet more fleet—
“Lo! naught contents thee, who content'st not Me.”

Naked I wait Thy love's uplifted stroke!
My harness piece by piece Thou hast hewn from me,
And smitten me to my knee;
I am defenseless utterly.
I slept, methinks, and woke,
And, slowly gazing, find me stripped in sleep.
In the rash lustihood of my young powers,
I shook the pillaring hours
And pulled my life upon me; grimed with smears
I stand amid the dust o' the mounded years—
My mangled youth lies dead beneath the heap.
My days have crackled and gone up in smoke,
Have puffed and burst as sun-starts on a stream.

Yea, faileth now each dream
The dreamer, and the lute the lutanist;
Even the linked fantasies, in whose blossomy twist
I swung the earth a trinket at my wrist,
Are yielding; cords of all too weak account
For earth with heavy griefs so overplussed.

Ah! is Thy love indeed
A weed, albeit an amaranthine weed,
Suffering no flowers except its own to mount?

Ah! must—

Designer infinite!—

Ah! must Thou char the wood ere Thou canst limn with
it?

My freshness spent its wavering shower i' the dust:
And now my heart is as a broken fount,

3022 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

Wherein tear-drippings stagnate, spilt down ever
 From the dank thoughts that shiver
 Upon the sighful branches of my mind.
 Such is; what is to be?
 The pulp so bitter, how shall taste the rind?
 I dimly guess what Time in mists confounds:
 Yet ever and anon a trumpet sounds
 From the hid battlements of Eternity;
 Those shaken mists a space unsettle, then
 Round the half-glimpsèd turrets slowly wash again.
 But not ere him who summoneth
 I first have seen, enwound
 With glooming robes purpureal, cypress-crowned;
 His name I know, and what his trumpet saith.
 Whether man's heart or life it be that yields
 Thee harvest, must Thy harvest fields
 Be dunged with rotten death?

Now of that long pursuit
 Comes on at hand the bruit;
 That Voice is round me like a bursting sea.
 "And is thy earth so marred,
 Shattered in shard on shard?
 Lo, all things fly thee, for thou flyest Me!
 Strange, piteous, futile thing,
 Wherefore should any set thee love apart?
 Seeing none but I makes much of naught" (He said),
 "And human love needs human meriting:
 How hast thou merited—
 Of all man's clotted clay the dingiest clot?
 Alack, thou knowest not
 How little worthy of any love thou art!
 Whom wilt thou find to love ignoble thee
 Save Me, save only Me?
 All which I took from thee, I did but take,
 Not for thy harms,
 But just that thou might'st seek it in My arms.
 All which thy child's mistake
 Fancies as lost, I have stored for thee at home:
 Rise, clasp My hand, and come!"

The Hound of Heaven 3023

Halts by me that footfall:
Is my gloom, after all,
Shade of His hand, outstretched caressingly?
"Ah, fondest, blindest, weakest,
I am He Whom thou seekest!
Thou dravest love from thee, who dravest Me."
Francis Thompson [1859?-1907]

“CARE-CHARMER SLEEP’

SLEEP

From “The Woman-Hater”

COME, Sleep, and with thy sweet deceiving
Lock me in delight awhile;
Let some pleasing dreams beguile
All my fancies; that from thence
I may feel an influence
All my powers of care bereaving!

Though but a shadow, but a sliding,
Let me know some little joy!
We that suffer long annoy
Are contented with a thought
Through an idle fancy wrought:
O let my joys have some abiding!

John Fletcher [1579-1625]

“SLEEP, SILENCE’ CHILD”

SLEEP, Silence’ child, sweet father of soft rest,
Prince, whose approach peace to all mortals brings,
Indifferent host to shepherds and to kings,
Sole comforter of minds with grief oppressed;
Lo, by thy charming rod all breathing things
Lie slumbering, with forgetfulness possessed,
And yet o’er me to spread thy drowsy wings
Thou sparest, alas! who cannot be thy guest.
Since I am thine, O come, but with that face
To inward light which thou art wont to show;
With feignèd solace ease a true-felt woe;
Or if, deaf god, thou do deny that grace,

Come as thou wilt, and what thou wilt bequeath:
I long to kiss the image of my death.

William Drummond [1585-1649]

TO SLEEP

A FLOCK of sheep that leisurely pass by,
One after one; the sound of rain, and bees
Murmuring; the fall of rivers, winds and seas,
Smooth fields, white sheets of water, and pure sky;
I've thought of all by turns, and yet do lie
Sleepless; and soon the small birds' melodies
Must hear, first uttered from my orchard trees;
And the first cuckoo's melancholy cry.
Even thus last night, and two nights more, I lay,
And could not win thee, Sleep! by any stealth:
So do not let me wear to-night away:
Without Thee what is all the morning's wealth?
Come, blessed barrier between day and day,
Dear mother of fresh thoughts and joyous health!

William Wordsworth [1770-1850]

VIXI

I HAVE lived and I have loved;
I have waked and I have slept;
I have sung and I have danced;
I have smiled and I have wept;
I have won and wasted treasure;
I have had my fill of pleasure;
And all these things were weariness,
And some of them were dreariness.
And all these things—but two things
Were emptiness and pain:
And Love—it was the best of them;
And Sleep—worth all the rest of them.

Unknown

SLEEP

O HAPPY Sleep! thou bear'st upon thy breast
The blood-red poppy of enchanting rest,
Draw near me through the stillness of this place
And let thy low breath move across my face,
As faint wind moves above a poplar's crest.

The broad seas darken slowly in the west;
The wheeling sea-birds call from nest to nest;
Draw near and touch me, leaning out of space,
O happy Sleep!

There is no sorrow hidden or confessed,
There is no passion uttered or suppressed,
Thou canst not for a little while efface;
Enfold me in thy mystical embrace,
Thou sovereign gift of God most sweet, most blest,
O happy Sleep!

Ada Louise Martin [18 -

THE QUIET NIGHTS

UNMINDFUL of my low desert
Who turn e'en blessings to my hurt,
God sends me graces o'er and o'er,
More than the sands on the seashore.

Among the blessings He doth give
My starveling soul that she may live,
I praise Him for my nights He kept
And all the quiet sleep I slept.

Since I was young, who now grow old,
For all those nights of heat, of cold,
I slept the sweet hours through, nor heard
Even the call of the first bird.

Nights when the darkness covered me
In a great peace like a great sea,
With waves of sweetness, who should lie
Wakeful for mine iniquity.

Cool nights of fragrance dripping sweet
After the sultriness of heat,
Amid gray meadows drenched with dew;
Sweet was the sleep my eyelids knew.

Surely some angel kept my bed
After I had knelt down and prayed;
Like a young child I slept until
The day stood at the window-sill.

I thank Him for the nights of stars,
Bright Saturn, with his rings, and Mars.
And overhead the Milky Way;
Nights when the Summer lightnings play.

How many a Milky Way I trod,
And through the mercy of my God
Drank milk and honey, wrapped in ease
Of darkness and sweet heaviness!

I thank Him for the wakening bird
And the struck hours I have not heard,
And for the morns so cool, so kind,
That found me fresh in heart and mind.

Among the gifts of His mercy,
More than the leaves upon the tree,
The sands upon the shore, I keep
And name my lovely nights of sleep.

Katharine Tynan [1861-

HOME AND FATHERLAND

HAME, HAME, HAME

HAME, hame, hame, O hame fain wad I be—
O hame, hame, hame, to my ain countree!

When the flower is i' the bud and the leaf is on the tree,
The lark shall sing me hame in my ain countree;
Hame, hame, hame, O hame fain wad I be—
O hame, hame, hame, to my ain countree!

The green leaf o' loyaltie's beginning for to fa',
The bonnie White Rose it is withering an' a';
But I'll water 't wi' the blude of usurping tyrannie,
An' green it will grow in my ain countree.

O, there's nocht now frae ruin my country can save,
But the keys o' kind heaven, to open the grave;
That a' the noble martyrs wha died for loyaltie
May rise again an' fight for their ain countree.

The great now are gane, a' wha ventured to save,
The new grass is springing on the tap o' their grave;
But the sun through the mirk blinks blithe in my e'e,
"I'll shine on ye yet in your ain countree."

Hame, hame, hame, O hame fain wad I be—
O hame, hame, hame, to my ain countree!

Allan Cunningham [1784-1842]

HOME, SWEET HOME!

From "Clari, the Maid of Milan"

'Mid pleasures and palaces though we may roam,
Be it ever so humble, there's no place like home;
A charm from the sky seems to hallow us there,
Which, seek through the world, is ne'er met with elsewhere.

Home, Home, sweet, sweet Home!
There's no place like Home! there's no place like Home!

My Old Kentucky Home 3029

An exile from home, splendor dazzles in vain;
O, give me my lowly thatched cottage again!
The birds singing gayly, that came at my call,—
Give me them,—and the peace of mind, dearer than all!
Home, Home, sweet, sweet Home!
There's no place like Home! there's no place like Home!

How sweet 'tis to sit 'neath a fond father's smile,
And the cares of a mother to soothe and beguile!
Let others delight mid new pleasures to roam,
But give me, oh, give me, the pleasures of home!
Home! Home! sweet, sweet Home!
There's no place like Home! there's no place like Home!

To thee I'll return, overburdened with care;
The heart's dearest solace will smile on me there;
No more from that cottage again will I roam;
Be it ever so humble, there's no place like home.
Home! Home! sweet, sweet Home!
There's no place like Home! there's no place like Home!

John Howard Payne [1792-1852]

MY OLD KENTUCKY HOME

THE sun shines bright in the old Kentucky home;
'Tis summer, the darkeys are gay;
The corn-top's ripe, and the meadow's in the bloom,
While the birds make music all the day.
The young folks roll on the little cabin floor,
All merry, all happy and bright;
By-'n'-by hard times comes a-knocking at the door:—
Then my old Kentucky home, good-night!

Weep no more, my lady,
O, weep no more to-day!
We will sing one song for the old Kentucky home,
For the old Kentucky home, far away.

They hunt no more for the possum and the coon,
On the meadow, the hill, and the shore;
They sing no more by the glimmer of the moon,
On the bench by the old cabin door.

The day goes by like a shadow o'er the heart,
 With sorrow, where all was delight;
 The time has come when the darkeys have to part:—
 Then my old Kentucky home, good-night!

The head must bow, and the back will have to bend,
 Wherever the darkey may go;
 A few more days and the troubles all will end,
 In the field where the sugar-canes grow.
 A few more days for to tote the weary load,—
 No matter, 'twill never be light;
 A few more days till we totter on the road:—
 Then my old Kentucky home, good-night!

Weep no more, my lady,
 O, weep no more to-day!
 We will sing one song for the old Kentucky home,
 For the old Kentucky home, far away.

Stephen Collins Foster [1826-1864]

THE OLD FOLKS AT HOME

Way down upon de Suwanee Ribber,
 Far, far away,
 Dere's wha my heart is turning ebber,
 Dere's wha de old folks stay.
 All up and down de whole creation
 Sadly I roam,
 Still longing for de old plantation,
 And for de old folks at home.

All de world am sad and dreary,
 Eb'rywhere I roam;
 Oh, darkeys, how my heart grows weary,
 Far from de old folks at home!

All round de little farm I wandered
 When I was young,
 Den many happy days I squandered;
 Many de songs I sung.

When I was playing wid my brudder
Happy was I;
Oh, take me to my kind old mudder!
Dere let me live and die.

One little hut among de bushes,
One dat I love,
Still sadly to my memory rushes,
No matter where I rove.
When will I see de bees a-humming
All around de comb?
When will I hear de banjo tumming,
Down in my good old home?
Stephen Collins Foster [1826-1864]

HOME

O, FALMOUTH is a fine town with ships in the bay,
And I wish from my heart it's there I was to-day;
I wish from my heart I was far away from here,
Sitting in my parlor and talking to my dear.
For it's home, dearie, home—it's home I want to be.
Our topsails are hoisted, and we'll away to sea.
O, the oak and the ash and the bonnie birken tree
They're all growing green in the old countrie.

In Baltimore a-walking a lady I did meet
With her babe on her arm as she came down the street;
And I thought how I sailed, and the cradle standing ready
For the pretty little babe that has never seen its daddie.
And it's home, dearie, home,—

O, if it be a lass, she shall wear a golden ring;
And if it be a lad, he shall fight for his king;
With his dirk and his hat and his little jacket blue
He shall walk the quarter-deck as his daddie used to do.
And it's home, dearie, home,—

O, there's a wind a-blowing, a-blowing from the west,
And that of all the winds is the one I like the best,

3032 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

For it blows at our backs, and it shakes our pennon free,
And it soon will blow us home to the old countrie.
For it's home, dearie, home—it's home I want to be.
Our topsails are hoisted, and we'll away to sea.
O, the oak and the ash and the bonnie birken tree
They're all growing green in the old countrie.

William Ernest Henley [1849-1903]

HOT WEATHER IN THE PLAINS—INDIA

FAR beyond the sky-line, where the steamers go,
There's a cool, green country, there's the land I know;
Where the gray mist rises from the hidden pool,
And the dew falls softly on the meadows cool.
When the exile's death has claimed me it is there my soul
shall fly,
To the pleasant English country, when my time has come to
die;
Where the west wind on the uplands echoes back the sea-
bird's cry—
Oh! it's there my soul will hasten though it's here my bones
must lie.

From the many temples, tinkling bells ring clear,
But a fairer music in my heart I hear—
Lilt of English skylark, plash of woodland streams,
Songs of thrush and blackbird fill my waking dreams.
In each pause from work and worry, it is there my thoughts
will fly,
To the pleasant English country with the pearly, misty
sky—
And the present's toil and trouble fade and cease and pass
me by—
Oh! it's there I fain would wander, but it's here my bones
must lie.

Hard and hot the sky spreads, one unchanging glare,
Far and wide the earth lies burnt and brown and bare,
Sunset brings no solace, night-time no redress,
Still the breathless silence mocks the land's distress.

So my thoughts recross the waters to the spring-times long
gone by,
Passed 'mid English woods and pastures, 'neath a softer,
sweeter sky;
For when death shall end my exile, thither will my spirit
fly—
Oh! it's there my soul shall wander, though it's here my
bones must lie.

E. H. Tipple [18 -

HEART'S CONTENT

"A SAIL! a sail! Oh, whence away,
And whither, o'er the foam?
Good brother mariners, we pray,
God speed you safely home!"
"Now wish us not so foul a wind,
Until the fair be spent;
For hearth and home we leave behind:
We sail for Heart's Content."

"For Heart's Content! And sail ye so,
With canvas flowing free?
But, pray you, tell us, if ye know,
Where may that harbor be?
For we that greet you, worn of time,
Wave-racked, and tempest-rent,
By sun and star, in every clime,
Have searched for Heart's Content.

"In every clime the world around,
The waste of waters o'er;
An El Dorado have we found,
That ne'er was found before.
The isles of spice, the lands of dawn,
Where East and West are blent—
All these our eyes have looked upon,
But where is Heart's Content?

“Oh, turn again, while yet ye may,
 And ere the hearths are cold,
 And all the embers ashen-gray,
 By which ye sat of old,
 And dumb in death the loving lips
 That mourned as forth ye went
 To join the fleet of missing ships,
 In quest of Heart's Content;

“And seek again the harbor-lights,
 Which faithful fingers trim,
 Ere yet alike the days and nights
 Unto your eyes are dim!
 For woe, alas! to those that roam
 Till time and tide are spent,
 And win no more the port of home—
 The only Heart's Content!”

Unknown

SONG

STAY, stay at home, my heart, and rest;
 Home-keeping hearts are happiest,
 For those that wander they know not where
 Are full of trouble and full of care;
 To stay at home is best.

Weary and homesick and distressed,
 They wander east, they wander west,
 And are baffled and beaten and blown about
 By the winds of the wilderness of doubt;
 To stay at home is best.

Then stay at home, my heart, and rest;
 The bird is safest in its nest;
 Over all that flutter their wings and fly
 A hawk is hovering in the sky;
 To stay at home is best.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow [1807-1882]

MY EARLY HOME

HERE sparrows build upon the trees,
And stockdove hides her nest;
The leaves are winnowed by the breeze
Into a calmer rest:
The black-cap's song was very sweet,
That used the rose to kiss;
It made the Paradise complete:
My early home was this.

The red-breast from the sweetbrier bush
Dropped down to pick the worm;
On the horse-chestnut sang the thrush,
O'er the house where I was born;
The moonlight, like a shower of pearls,
Fell o'er this 'bower of bliss',
And on the bench sat boys and girls:
My early home was this.

The old house stooped just like a cave,
Thatched o'er with mosses green;
Winter around the walls would rave,
But all was calm within;
The trees are here all green again,
Here bees the flowers still kiss,
But flowers and trees seemed sweeter then:
My early home was this.

John Clare [1793-1864]

THE OLD HOME

AN old lane, an old gate, an old house by a tree;
A wild wood, a wild brook—they will not let me be:
In boyhood I knew them, and still they call to me.

Down deep in my heart's core I hear them and my eyes
Through tear-mists behold them beneath the oldtime skies,
'Mid bee-boom and rose-bloom and orchard-lands arise.

3036 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

I hear them; and heartsick with longing is my soul,
To walk there, to dream there, beneath the sky's blue bowl;
Around me, within me, the weary world made whole.

To talk with the wild brook of all the long ago;
To whisper the wood-wind of things we used to know
When we were old companions, before my heart knew woe.

To walk with the morning and watch its rose unfold;
To drowse with the noontide lulled in its heart of gold;
To lie with the night-time and dream the dreams of old.

To tell to the old trees, and to each listening leaf,
The longing, the yearning, as in my boyhood brief,
The old hope, the old love, would ease me of my grief.

The old lane, the old gate, the old house by the tree,
The wild wood, the wild brook—they will not let me be:
In boyhood I knew them, and still they call to me.

Madison Cawein [1865-1914]

THE AULD HOUSE

Oh, the auld house, the auld house,—
What though the rooms were wee?
Oh, kind hearts were dwelling there,
And bairnies fu' o' glee;
The wild rose and the jessamine
Still hang upon the wa':
How mony cherished memories
Do they sweet flowers reca'!

Oh, the auld laird, the auld laird,
Sae canty, kind, and crouse,—
How mony did he welcome to
His ain wee dear auld house;
And the leddy too, sae genty,
There sheltered Scotland's heir,
And clipped a lock wi' her ain hand,
Frae his lang yellow hair.

The mavis still doth sweetly sing,
The bluebells sweetly blaw,
The bonny Earn's clear winding still,
But the auld house is awa'.
The auld house, the auld house,—
Deserted though ye be,
There ne'er can be a new house
Will seem sae fair to me.

Still flourishing the auld pear-tree
The bairnies liked to see;
And oh, how often did they speir
When ripe they a' wad be!
The voices sweet, the wee bit feet
Aye rinnin' here and there,
The merry shout—oh! whiles we greet
To think we'll hear nae mair.

For they are a' wide scattered now;
Some to the Indies gane,
And ane, alas! to her lang hame;
Not here we'll meet again.
The kirkyard, the kirkyard!
Wi' flowers o' every hue,
Sheltered by the holly's shade
An' the dark sombre yew.

The setting sun, the setting sun!
How glorious it gaed doon;
The cloudy splendor raised our hearts
To cloudless skies aboon.
The auld dial, the auld dial!
It tauld how time did pass;
The wintry winds hae dung it doon,
Now hid 'mang weeds and grass.

Carolina Nairne [1766-1845]

THE ROWAN TREE

O ROWAN tree, O rowan tree! thou'lt aye be dear to me!
 Intwined thou art wi' mony ties o' hame and infancy.
 Thy leaves were aye the first o' spring, thy flowers the sim-
 mer's pride;
 There wasna sic a bonnie tree in a' the country side.
 O rowan tree!

How fair wert thou in simmer time, wi' a' thy clusters white,
 How rich and gay thy autumn dress, wi' berries red and
 bright!
 On thy fair stem were mony names which now nae mair I see,
 But they're engraven on my heart—forgot they ne'er can be!
 O rowan tree!

We sat aneath thy spreading shade, the bairnies round thee
 ran,
 They pu'd thy bonnie berries red, and necklaces they strang.
 My mother! O I see her still, she smiled our sports to see,
 Wi' little Jeanie on her lap, and Jamie at her knee.
 O rowan tree!

O there arose my father's prayer, in holy evening's calm;
 How sweet was then my mother's voice in the Martyr's
 psalm!
 Now a' are gane! we meet nae mair aneath the rowan tree!
 But hallowed thoughts around thee twine o' hame and in-
 fancy,
 O rowan tree!

Carolina Nairne [1766-1845]

THE FIRE OF DRIFT-WOOD

WE sat within the farm-house old,
 Whose windows, looking o'er the bay,
 Gave to the sea-breeze damp and cold
 An easy entrance, night and day.

Not far away we saw the port,
The strange, old-fashioned, silent town,
The lighthouse, the dismantled fort,
The wooden houses, quaint and brown.

We sat and talked until the night,
Descending, filled the little room;
Our faces faded from the sight,
Our voices only broke the gloom.

We spake of many a vanished scene,
Of what we once had thought and said,
Of what had been, and might have been,
And who was changed, and who was dead;

And all that fills the heart of friends,
When first they feel, with secret pain,
Their lives thenceforth have separate ends,
And never can be one again;

The first slight swerving of the heart,
That words are powerless to express,
And leave it still unsaid in part,
Or say it in too great excess.

The very tones in which we spake
Had something strange, I could but mark;
The leaves of memory seemed to make
A mournful rustling in the dark.

Oft died the words upon our lips,
As suddenly, from out the fire
Built of the wreck of stranded ships,
The flames would leap and then expire.

And, as their splendor flashed and failed,
We thought of wrecks upon the main,
Of ships dismasted, that were hailed,
And sent no answer back again.

3040 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

The windows, rattling in their frames,
The ocean, roaring up the beach,
The gusty blast, the bickering flames,
All mingled vaguely in our speech;

Until they made themselves a part
Of fancies floating through the brain,
The long-lost ventures of the heart,
That send no answers back again.

O flames that glowed! O hearts that yearned!
They were indeed too much akin,
The drift-wood fire without that burned,
The thoughts that burned and glowed within.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow [1807-1882]

MY AIN FIRESIDE

I HAE seen great anes and sat in great ha's,
'Mang lords and fine ladies a' covered wi' braws,
At feasts made for princes wi' princes I've been,
When the grand shine o' splendor has dazzled my een;
But a sight sae delightfu' I trow I ne'er spied
As the bonny blithe blink o' my ain fireside.
My ain fireside, my ain fireside,
O, cheery's the blink o' my ain fireside;
My ain fireside, my ain fireside,
O, there's naught to compare wi' ane's ain fireside.

Ance mair, Gude be thankit, round my ain heartsome ingle
Wi' the friends o' my youth I cordially mingle;
Nae forms to compel me to seem wae or glad,
I may laugh when I'm merry, and sigh when I'm sad.
Nae falsehood to dread, and nae malice to fear,
But truth to delight me, and friendship to cheer;
Of a' roads to happiness ever were tried,
There's nane half so sure as ane's ain fireside.
My ain fireside, my ain fireside,
O, there's naught to compare wi' ane's ain fireside.

When I draw in my stool on my cozy hearthstane,
 My heart louns sae light I scarce ken 't for my ain;
 Care's down on the wind, it is clean out o' sight,
 Past troubles they seem but as dreams o' the night.
 I hear but kend voices, kend faces I see,
 And mark saft affection glent fond frae ilk ee;
 Nae fleechings o' flattery, nae boastings o' pride,
 'Tis heart speaks to heart at ane's ain fireside.
 My ain fireside, my ain fireside,
 O, there's naught to compare wi' ane's ain fireside.
Elizabeth Hamilton [1758-1816]

THE INGLE-SIDE

It's rare to see the morning bleeze
 Like a bonfire frae the sea,
 It's fair to see the burnie kiss
 The lip o' the flowery lea;
 An' fine it is on green hillside,
 Where hums the bonnie bee,
 But rarer, fairer, finer far
 Is the ingle-side for me.

 Glens may be gilt wi' gowans rare,
 The birds may fill the tree;
 An' haughs hae a' the scented ware
 The simmer-growth can gie:
 But the canty hearth where cronies meet,
 An' the darling o' our e'e,
 That makes to us a warl' complete:
 Oh, the ingle-side for me!
Hew Ainslee [1792-1878]

THE CANE-BOTTOMED CHAIR

IN tattered old slippers that toast at the bars,
 And a ragged old jacket perfumed with cigars,
 Away from the world and its toils and its cares,
 I've a snug little kingdom up four pair of stairs.

3042 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

To mount to this realm is a toil, to be sure,
But the fire there is bright and the air rather pure;
And the view I behold on a sunshiny day
Is grand, through the chimney-pots over the way.

This snug little chamber is crammed in all nooks
With worthless old knickknacks and silly old books,
And foolish old odds and foolish old ends,
Cracked bargains from brokers, cheap keepsakes from friends.

Old armor, prints, pictures, pipes, china (all cracked),
Old rickety tables, and chairs broken-backed;
A twopenny treasury, wondrous to see;
What matter? 'tis pleasant to you, friend, and me.

No better divan need the Sultan require,
Than the creaking old sofa that basks by the fire,
And 'tis wonderful, surely, what music you get
From the rickety, ramshackle, wheezy spinet.

That praying-rug came from a Turcoman's camp;
By Tiber once twinkled that brazen old lamp;
A Mameluke fierce yonder dagger has drawn:
'Tis a murderous knife to toast muffins upon.

Long, long through the hours, and the night, and the chimes,
Here we talk of old books, and old friends, and old times:
As we sit in a fog made of rick Latakie,
This chamber is pleasant to you, friend, and me.

But of all the cheap treasures that garnish my nest,
There's one that I love and I cherish the best;
For the finest of couches that's padded with hair
I never would change thee, my cane-bottomed chair.

'Tis a bandy-legged, high-shouldered, worm-eaten seat,
With a creaking old back, and twisted old feet;
But since the fair morning when Fanny sat there,
I bless thee and love thee, old cane-bottomed chair.

If chairs have but feeling, in holding such charms,
A thrill must have passed through your withered old arms!

I looked, and I longed, and I wished in despair;
I wished myself turned to a cane-bottomed chair.

It was but a moment she sat in this place,
She'd a scarf on her neck, and a smile on her face!
A smile on her face, and a rose in her hair,
And she sat there, and bloomed in my cane-bottomed chair.

And so I have valued my chair ever since,
Like the shrine of a saint, or the throne of a prince;
Saint Fanny, my patroness sweet I declare,
The queen of my heart and my cane-bottomed chair.

When the candles burn low, and the company's gone,
In the silence of night as I sit here alone—
I sit here alone, but we yet are a pair—
My Fanny I see in my cane-bottomed chair.

She comes from the past, and revisits my room;
She looks as she then did, all beauty and bloom;
So smiling and tender, so fresh and so fair,
And yonder she sits in my cane-bottomed chair.

William Makepeace Thackeray [1811-1863]

“THOSE EVENING BELLS”

THOSE evening bells! those evening bells!
How many a tale their music tells
Of youth, and home, and that sweet time
When last I heard their soothing chime!

Those joyous hours are passed away;
And many a heart that then was gay,
Within the tomb now darkly dwells,
And hears no more those evening bells.

And so 'twill be when I am gone,—
That tuneful peal will still ring on;
While other bards shall walk these dells,
And sing your praise, sweet evening bells.

Thomas Moore [1779-1852]

THE OLD CLOCK ON THE STAIRS.

SOMEWHAT back from the village street
 Stands the old-fashioned country-seat.
 Across its antique portico
 Tall poplar-trees their shadows throw;
 And from its station in the hall
 An ancient timepiece says to all,—
 “Forever—never!
 Never—forever!”

Half-way up the stairs it stands,
 And points and beckons with its hands
 From its case of massive oak,
 Like a monk, who, under his cloak,
 Crosses himself, and sighs, alas!
 With sorrowful voice to all who pass,—
 “Forever—never!
 Never—forever!”

By day its voice is low and light;
 But in the silent dead of night,
 Distinct as a passing footstep's fall,
 It echoes along the vacant hall,
 Along the ceiling, along the floor,
 And seems to say, at each chamber-door,—
 “Forever—never!
 Never—forever!”

Through days of sorrow and of mirth,
 Through days of death and days of birth,
 Through every swift vicissitude
 Of changeful time, unchanged it has stood,
 And as if, like God, it all things saw,
 It calmly repeats those words of awe,—
 “Forever—never!
 Never—forever!”

In that mansion used to be
 Free-hearted Hospitality;
 His great fires up the chimney roared;
 The stranger feasted at his board;

The Old Clock on the Stairs 3045

But, like the skeleton at the feast,
That warning timepiece never ceased,—

“Forever—never!

Never—forever!”

There groups of merry children played,
There youths and maidens dreaming strayed;
O precious hours! O golden prime,
And affluence of love and time!
Even as a miser counts his gold,
Those hours the ancient timepiece told,—

“Forever—never!

Never—forever!”

From that chamber, clothed in white,
The bride came forth on her wedding night;
There, in that silent room below,
The dead lay in his shroud of snow;
And in the hush that followed the prayer,
Was heard the old clock on the stair,—

“Forever—never!

Never—forever!”

All are scattered now and fled,
Some are married, some are dead;
And when I ask, with throbs of pain,
“Ah! when shall they all meet again?”
As in the days long since gone by,
The ancient timepiece makes reply,—

“Forever—never!

Never—forever!”

Never here, forever there,
Where all parting, pain, and care,
And death, and time shall disappear,—
Forever there, but never here!
The horologe of Eternity
Sayeth this incessantly,—

“Forever—never!

Never—forever!”

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow [1807-1882]

"MOTHER, HOME, HEAVEN"

THREE words fall sweetly on my soul,
 As music from an angel's lyre,
 That bid my spirit spurn control,
 And upward to its source aspire;
 The sweetest sounds to mortals given
 Are heard in Mother, Home, and Heaven.

Dear Mother!—ne'er shall I forget
 Thy brow, thine eye, thy pleasant smile;
 Though in the sea of death hath set
 Thy star of life, my guide awhile,
 Oh, never shall thy form depart
 From the bright pictures in my heart.

And like a bird that from the flowers,
 Wing-weary seeks her wonted nest,
 My spirit, e'en in manhood's hours,
 Turns back in childhood's Home to rest;
 The cottage, garden, hill, and stream,
 Still linger like a pleasant dream.

And while to one engulfing grave
 By Time's swift tide we're driven,
 How sweet the thought that every wave
 But bears us nearer Heaven!
 There we shall meet, when life is o'er,
 In that blest Home, to part no more.

William Goldsmith Brown [1812-1906]

THE HERO

My hero is na decked wi' gowd,
 He has nae glittering state;
 Renown upon a field o' blood
 In war he hasna met.
 He has nae siller in his pouch,
 Nae menials at his ca';
 The proud o' earth frae him would turn,
 And bid him stand awa'.

His coat is hame-spun hoddan-gray,
 His shoon are clouted sair,
 His garments, maist unhero-like,
 Are a' the waur o' wear:
 His limbs are strong—his shoulders broad,
 His hands were made to plow;
 He's rough without, but sound within;
 His heart is bauldly true.

He toils at e'en, he toils at morn,
 His wark is never through;
 A coming life o' weary toil
 Is ever in his view.
 But on he trudges, keeping aye
 A stout heart to the brae,
 And proud to be an honest man
 Until his dying day.

His hame a hame o' happiness
 And kindly love may be;
 And monie a nameless dwelling-place
 Like his we still may see.
 His happy altar-hearth so bright
 Is ever bleezing there;
 And cheerfu' faces round it set
 Are an unending prayer.

The poor man in his humble hame,
 Like God, who dwells aboon,
 Makes happy hearts around him there,
 Sae joyfu' late and soon.
 His toil is sair, his toil is lang;
 But weary nights and days,
 Hame—happiness akin to his—
 A hunder-fauld repays.

Go, mock at conquerors and kings!
 What happiness give they?
 Go, tell the painted butterflies
 To kneel them down and pray!

Go, stand erect in manhood's pride,
 Be what a man should be,
 Then come, and to my hero bend
 Upon the grass your knee!

Robert Nicoll [1814-1837]

THE COTTER'S SATURDAY NIGHT

INSCRIBED TO ROBERT AIKEN, ESQ.

Let not Ambition mock their useful toil,
 Their homely joys, and destiny obscure;
 Nor Grandeur hear with a disdainful smile
 The short and simple annals of the poor.—GRAY

My loved, my honored, much-respected friend!
 No mercenary bard his homage pays;
 With honest pride, I scorn each selfish end;
 My dearest meed, a friend's esteem and praise.
 To you I sing, in simple Scottish lays,
 The lowly train in life's sequestered scene;
 The native feelings strong, the guileless ways;
 What Aiken in a cottage would have been;
 Ah! though his worth unknown, far happier there, I ween.

November chill blows loud wi' angry sigh;
 The shortening winter-day is near a close;
 The miry beasts retreating frae the pleugh,
 The blackening trains o' craws to their repose:
 The toilworn cotter frae his labor goes,—
 This night his weekly moil is at an end,—
 Collects his spades, his mattocks, and his hoes,
 Hoping the morn in ease and rest to spend,
 And weary, o'er the moor, his course does hameward bend.

At length his lonely cot appears in view,
 Beneath the shelter of an aged tree;
 The expectant wee things, toddlin', stacher through
 To meet their dad, wi' flichterin' noise an' glee.
 His wee bit ingle, blinking bonnily,
 His clean hearthstane, his thriftie wife's smile,
 The lispin' infant prattling on his knee,
 Does a' his weary kiaugh and care beguile,
 And makes him quite forget his labor and his toil.

The Cotter's Saturday Night 3049

Belyve, the elder bairns come drapping in,
At service out, amang the farmers roun';
Some ca' the pleugh, some herd, some tentie rin
A cannie errand to a neibor town;
Their eldest hope, their Jenny, woman grown,
In youthfu' bloom, love sparkling in her e'e,
Comes hame, perhaps to shew a braw new gown,
Or deposit her sair-won penny-fee,
To help her parents dear, if they in hardship be.

With joy unfeigned, brothers and sisters meet,
And each for other's weelfare kindly spiers:
The social hours, swift-winged, unnoticed fleet;
Each tells the uncoss that he sees or hears;
The parents, partial, eye their hopeful years;
Anticipation forward points the view.
The mother, wi' her needle and her shears,
Gars auld claes look amaist as weel's the new;
The father mixes a' wi' admonition due.

Their master's and their mistress's command,
The youngers a' are warnèd to obey;
And mind their labors wi' an eydent hand,
And ne'er, though out o' sight, to jauk or play:
"And oh! be sure to fear the Lord alway!
And mind your duty, duly, morn and night!
Lest in temptation's path ye gang astray,
Implore His counsel and assisting might:
They never sought in vain that sought the Lord aright!"

But, hark! a rap comes gently to the door;
Jenny, wha kens the meaning o' the same,
Tells how a neibor lad cam o'er the moor,
To do some errands, and convoy her hame.
The wily mother sees the conscious flame
Sparkle in Jenny's e'e, and flush her cheek;
With heart-struck anxious care inquires his name,
While Jenny haffins is afraid to speak;
Weel pleased the mother hears it's nae wild, worthless rake.

3050 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

Wi' kindly welcome, Jenny brings him ben;
 A strappin' youth; he taks the mother's eye;
 Blithe Jenny sees the visit's no ill-ta'en;
 The father cracks of horses, pleughs, and kye.
 The youngster's artless heart o'erflows wi' joy,
 But blate and lathefu', scarce can weel behave;
 The mother, wi' a woman's wiles, can spy
 What makes the youth sae bashfu' an' sae grave:
 Weel pleased to think her bairn's respected like the lave.

O happy love! where love like this is found!
 O heartfelt raptures! bliss beyond compare!
 I've pacèd much this weary, mortal round,
 And sage experience bids me this declare:—
 If Heaven a draught of heavenly pleasure spare,
 One cordial in this melancholy vale,
 'Tis when a youthful, loving, modest pair
 In other's arms breathe out the tender tale,
 Beneath the milk-white thorn that scents the evening gale.

Is there, in human form, that bears a heart,
 A wretch, a villain, lost to love and truth,
 That can, with studied, sly, ensnaring art,
 Betray sweet Jenny's unsuspecting youth?
 Curse on his perjured arts! dissembling smooth!
 Are honor, virtue, conscience, all exiled?
 Is there no pity, no relenting ruth,
 Points to the parents fondling o'er their child?
 Then paints the ruined maid, and their distraction wild?

But now the supper crowns their simple board,
 The halesome parritch, chief o' Scotia's food,
 The soupe their only hawkie does afford,
 That 'yont the hallan snugly chows her cood:
 The dame brings forth, in complimental mood,
 To grace the lad, her weel-hained kebbuck, fell,
 And aft he's pressed, and aft he ca's it guid;
 The frugal wifie, garrulous, will tell
 How 'twas a towmond auld, sin' lint was i' the bell.

The Cotter's Saturday Night 3051

The cheerfu' supper done, wi' serious face,
They, round the ingle, form a circle wide;
The sire turns o'er, wi' patriarchal grace,
The big ha' Bible, ance his father's pride;
His bonnet reverently is laid aside,
His lyart haffets wearing thin and bare;
Those strains that once did sweet in Zion glide,
He wales a portion with judicious care;
And "Let us worship God!" he says, with solemn air.

They chant their artless notes in simple guise;
They tune their hearts, by far the noblest aim:
Perhaps "Dundee's" wild-warbling measures rise,
Or plaintive "Martyrs," worthy of the name,
Or noble "Elgin" beets the heavenward flame,
The sweetest far of Scotia's holy lays:
Compared with these, Italian trills are tame;
The tickled ear no heartfelt raptures raise;
Nae unison hae they with our Creator's praise.

The priest-like father reads the sacred page,—
How Abram was the friend of God on high;
Or Moses bade eternal warfare wage
With Amalek's ungracious progeny;
Or how the royal bard did groaning lie
Beneath the stroke of Heaven's avenging ire;
Or Job's pathetic plaint, and wailing cry;
Or rapt Isaiah's wild, seraphic fire;
Or other holy seers that tune the sacred lyre.

Perhaps the Christian volume is the theme,—
How guiltless blood for guilty man was shed;
How He, who bore in heaven the second name,
Had not on earth whereon to lay his head:
How his first followers and servants sped
The precepts sage they wrote to many a land;
How he, who lone in Patmos banishèd,
Saw in the sun a mighty angel stand,
And heard great Babylon's doom pronounced by Heaven's
command.

3052 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

Then kneeling down to Heaven's Eternal King,
 The saint, the father, and the husband prays:
 Hope "springs exulting on triumphant wing,"
 That thus they all shall meet in future days:
 There ever bask in uncreated rays,
 No more to sigh, or shed the bitter tear,
 Together hymning their Creator's praise,
 In such society, yet still more dear;
 While circling Time moves round in an eternal sphere.

Compared with this, how poor Religion's pride,
 In all the pomp of method and of art,
 When men display to congregations wide,
 Devotion's every grace, except the heart!
 The Power, incensed, the pageant will desert,
 The pompous strain, the sacerdotal stole;
 But, haply, in some cottage far apart,
 May hear, well pleased, the language of the soul;
 And in His Book of Life the inmates poor enroll.

Then homeward all take off their several way;
 The youngling cottagers retire to rest:
 The parent-pair their secret homage pay,
 And proffer up to Heaven the warm request,
 That He, who stills the raven's clamorous nest,
 And decks the lily fair in flowery pride,
 Would, in the way His wisdom sees the best,
 For them and for their little ones provide;
 But, chiefly, in their hearts with grace divine preside.

From scenes like these old Scotia's grandeur springs,
 That makes her loved at home, revered abroad;
 Princes and lords are but the breath of kings,
 "An honest man's the noblest work of God";
 And certes, in fair Virtue's heavenly road,
 The cottage leaves the palace far behind:
 What is a lordling's pomp?—a cumbrous load,
 Disguising oft the wretch of human kind,
 Studied in arts of hell, in wickedness refined!

O Scotia! my dear, my native soil!
For whom my warmest wish to Heaven is sent,
Long may thy hardy sons of rustic toil
Be blest with health, and peace, and sweet content!
And, oh, may Heaven their simple lives prevent
From luxury's contagion, weak and vile!
Then, howe'er crowns and coronets be rent,
A virtuous populace may rise the while,
And stand a wall of fire around their much-loved isle.

O Thou! who poured the patriotic tide,
That streamed through Wallace's undaunted heart;
Who dared to nobly stem tyrannic pride,
Or nobly die, the second glorious part,
(The patriot's God peculiarly thou art,
His friend, inspirer, guardian, and reward!)
O, never, never Scotia's realm desert;
But still the patriot, and the patriot bard,
In bright succession raise, her ornament and guard!

Robert Burns [1759-1796]

ON THE RECEIPT OF MY MOTHER'S PICTURE OUT OF NORFOLK

THE GIFT OF MY COUSIN, ANN BODHAM

O THAT those lips had language! Life has passed
With me but roughly since I heard thee last.
Those lips are thine,—thy own sweet smile I see,
The same that oft in childhood solaced me;
Voice only fails, else how distinct they say,
"Grieve not, my child; chase all thy fears away!"
The meek intelligence of those dear eyes
(Blest be the art that can immortalize,
The art that baffles Time's tyrannic claim
To quench it!) here shines on me still the same.
Faithful remembrancer of one so dear!
O welcome guest, though unexpected here!
Who bid'st me honor with an artless song,
Affectionate, a mother lost so long,

I will obey, not willingly alone,
 But gladly, as the precept were her own:
 And, while that face renews my filial grief,
 Fancy shall weave a charm for my relief,
 Shall steep me in Elysian reverie,
 A momentary dream that thou art she.

My mother! when I learned that thou wast dead,
 Say, wast thou conscious of the tears I shed?
 Hovered thy spirit o'er thy sorrowing son,
 Wretch even then, life's journey just begun?
 Perhaps thou gavest me, though unfelt, a kiss:
 Perhaps a tear, if souls can weep in bliss—
 Ah, that maternal smile! It answers—Yes.
 I heard the bell tolled on thy burial day;
 I saw the hearse that bore thee slow away;
 And, turning from my nursery window, drew
 A long, long sigh, and wept a last adieu!
 But was it such?—It was.—Where thou art gone
 Adieus and farewells are a sound unknown.
 May I but meet thee on that peaceful shore,
 The parting word shall pass my lips no more.
 Thy maidens, grieved themselves at my concern,
 Oft gave me promise of thy quick return.
 What ardently I wished I long believed,
 And, disappointed still, was still deceived.
 By expectation every day beguiled,
 Dupe of *to-morrow* even from a child.
 Thus many a sad to-morrow came and went,
 Till, all my stock of infant sorrow spent,
 I learned at last submission to my lot;
 But, though I less deplored thee, ne'er forgot.

Where once we dwelt our name is heard no more:
 Children not thine have trod my nursery floor;
 And where the gardener Robin, day by day,
 Drew me to school along the public way,
 Delighted with my bawble coach, and wrapped
 In scarlet mantle warm, and velvet capped,
 'Tis now become a history little known
 That once we called the pastoral house our own.

Short-lived possession! but the record fair,
That memory keeps of all thy kindness there,
Still outlives many a storm that has effaced
A thousand other themes, less deeply traced.
Thy nightly visits to my chamber made,
That thou might'st know me safe and warmly laid;
Thy morning bounties ere I left my home,
The biscuit, or confectionery plum;
The fragrant waters on my cheek bestowed
By thy own hand, till fresh they shone and glowed;
All this, and, more endearing still than all,
Thy constant flow of love, that knew no fall,
Ne'er roughened by those cataracts and brakes
That humor interposed too often makes;
All this still legible in memory's page,
And still to be so to my latest age,
Adds joy to duty, makes me glad to pay
Such honors to thee as my numbers may;
Perhaps a frail memorial, but sincere,
Not scorned in heaven, though little noticed here.

Could Time, his flight reversed, restore the hours,
When, playing with thy vesture's tissued flowers,
The violet, the pink, the jessamine,
I pricked them into paper with a pin
(And thou wast happier than myself the while,
Wouldst softly speak, and stroke my head and smile),
Could those few pleasant days again appear,
Might one wish bring them, would I wish them here?
I would not trust my heart,—the dear delight
Seems so to be desired, perhaps I might,—
But no,—what here we call our life is such,
So little to be loved, and thou so much,
That I should ill requite thee to constrain
Thy unbound spirit into bonds again.

Thou, as a gallant bark, from Albion's coast
(The storms all weathered and the ocean crossed),
Shoots into port at some well-havened isle,
Where spices breathe, and brighter seasons smile;
There sits quiescent on the floods, that show
Her beauteous form reflected clear below,

While airs impregnated with incense play
 Around her, fanning light her streamers gay;
 So thou, with sails how swift! hast reached the shore,
 "Where tempests never beat nor billows roar,"
 And thy loved consort on the dangerous tide
 Of life long since has anchored by thy side.
 But me, scarce hoping to attain that rest,
 Always from port withheld, always distressed,—
 Me howling blasts drive devious, tempest-tossed,
 Sails ripped, seams opening wide, and compass lost;
 And day by day some current's thwarting force
 Sets me more distant from a prosperous course.
 Yet oh, the thought that thou art safe, and he!
 That thought is joy, arrive what may to me.
 My boast is not that I deduce my birth
 From loins enthroned, and rulers of the earth;
 But higher far my proud pretensions rise,—
 The son of parents passed into the skies!
 And now, farewell!—Time, unrevoked, has run
 His wonted course; yet what I wished is done.
 By contemplation's help, not sought in vain,
 I seem to have lived my childhood o'er again:
 To have renewed the joys that once were mine,
 Without the sin of violating thine;
 And, while the wings of Fancy still are free,
 And I can view this mimic show of thee,
 Time has but half succeeded in his theft,—
 Thyself removed, thy power to soothe me left.

William Cowper [1731-1800]

THE CROWING OF THE RED COCK

ACROSS the Eastern sky has glowed
 The flicker of a blood-red dawn,
 Once more the clarion cock has crowed,
 Once more the sword of Christ is drawn.
 A million burning rooftrees light
 The world-wide path of Israel's flight.

Where is the Hebrew's Fatherland?

The folk of Christ is sore bestead;
The Son of Man is bruised and banned,
Nor finds whereon to lay his head.
His cup is gall, his meat is tears,
His passion lasts a thousand years.

Each crime that wakes in man the beast,
Is visited upon his kind.
The lust of mobs, the greed of priest,
The tyranny of kings, combined
To root his seed from earth again;
His record is one cry of pain.

When the long roll of Christian guilt
Against his sires and kin is known,
The flood of tears, the life-blood spilt,
The agony of ages shown,
What oceans can the stain remove
From Christian law and Christian love?

Nay, close the book; not now, not here,
The hideous tale of sin narrate,
Re-echoing in the martyr's ear
Even he might nurse revengeful hate,
Even he might turn in wrath sublime,
With blood for blood and crime for crime.

Coward? Not he, who faces death,
Who singly against worlds has fought,
For what? A name he may not breathe,
For liberty of prayer and thought.
The angry sword he will not whet,
His nobler task is—to forget.

Emma Lazarus [1849-1887]

THE WORLD'S JUSTICE

If the sudden tidings came
That on some far, foreign coast,
Buried ages long from fame,
Had been found a remnant lost

Of that hoary race who dwelt
 By the golden Nile divine,
 Spake the Pharaoh's tongue and knelt
 At the moon-crowned Isis' shrine—
 How at reverend Egypt's feet,
 Pilgrims from all lands would meet!

If the sudden news were known,
 That anigh the desert-place
 Where once blossomed Babylon,
 Scions of a mighty race
 Still survived, of giant build,
 Huntsmen, warriors, priest and sage,
 Whose ancestral fame had filled,
 Trumpet-tongued, the earlier age,
 How at old Assyria's feet
 Pilgrims from all lands would meet!

Yet when Egypt's self was young,
 And Assyria's bloom unworn,
 Ere the mythic Homer sung,
 Ere the gods of Greece were born,
 Lived the nation of one God,
 Priests of freedom, sons of Shem,
 Never quelled by yoke or rod,
 Founders of Jerusalem—
 Is there one abides to-day,
 Seeker of dead cities, say!

Answer, now as then, *they are*;
 Scattered broadcast o'er the lands,
 Knit in spirit nigh and far,
 With indissoluble bands.
 Half the world adores their God,
 They the living law proclaim,
 And their guerdon is—the rod,
 Stripes and scourgings, death and shame.
 Still on Israel's head forlorn,
 Every nation heaps its scorn.

Emma Lazarus [1849-1887]

DOVER CLIFFS

ON these white cliffs, that calm above the flood
Uplift their shadowing heads, and at their feet
Hear not the surge that has for ages beat,
How many a lonely wanderer has stood;
And, whilst the lifted murmur met his ear
And o'er the distant billows the still eve
Sailed slow, has thought of all his heart must leave
To-morrow; of the friends he loved most dear;
Of social scenes from which he wept to part.
Oh! if, like me, he knew how fruitless all
The thoughts that would full fain the past recall,
Soon would he quell the risings of his heart,
And brave the wild winds and unhearing tide,—
The World his country, and his God his guide.

William Lisle Bowles [1762-1850]

AN ITALIAN SONG

DEAR is my little native vale:
The ringdove builds and murmurs there;
Close by my cot she tells her tale
To every passing villager.
The squirrel leaps from tree to tree,
And shells his nuts at liberty.

In orange groves and myrtle bowers,
That breathe a gale of fragrance round,
I charm the fairy-footed hours
With my loved lute's romantic sound;
Or crowns of living laurel weave
For those that win the race at eve.

The shepherd's horn at break of day,
The ballet danced in twilight glade,
The canzonet and roundelay
Sung in the silent greenwood shade;
These simple joys, that never fail,
Shall bind me to my native vale!

Samuel Rogers [1763-1855]

THE EXILE'S SONG

Oh, why left I my hame?
 Why did I cross the deep?
 Oh, why left I the land
 Where my forefathers sleep?
 I sigh for Scotia's shore,
 And I gaze across the sea,
 But I canna get a blink
 O' my ain countrie!

The palm-tree waveth high,
 And fair the myrtle springs;
 And to the Indian maid
 The bulbul sweetly sings;
 But I dinna see the broom
 Wi' its tassels on the lea,
 Nor hear the lintie's sang
 O' my ain countrie!

Oh, here no Sabbath bell
 Awakes the Sabbath morn,
 Nor song of reapers heard
 Among the yellow corn:
 For the tyrant's voice is here,
 And the wail o' slaverie;
 But the sun of freedom shines
 In my ain countrie!

There's a hope for every woe,
 And a balm for every pain,
 But the first joys o' our heart
 Come never back again.
 There's a track upon the deep,
 And a path across the sea;
 But the weary ne'er return
 To their ain countrie!

Robert Gilfillan [1798-1850]

"THE SUN RISES BRIGHT IN FRANCE"

THE sun rises bright in France,
And fair sets he;
But he has tint the blithe blink he had
In my ain countrie.

O, it's nae my ain ruin
That saddens aye my e'e,
But the dear Marie I left behin'
Wi' sweet bairnies three.

My lanely hearth burned bonnie,
An' smiled my ain Marie;
I've left a' my heart behin'
In my ain countrie.

The bird comes back to summer,
And the blossom to the bee;
But I'll win back, O never,
To my ain countrie.

O, I am leal to high Heaven,
Which aye was leal to me,
An' there I'll meet ye a' soon
Frae my ain countrie!

Allan Cunningham [1784-1842]

FATHER LAND AND MOTHER TONGUE

OUR Father Land! and wouldst thou know
Why we should call it Father Land?
It is that Adam here below
Was made of earth by Nature's hand;
And he, our father made of earth,
Hath peopled earth on every hand;
And we, in memory of his birth,
Do call our country Father Land.

At first, in Eden's bowers, they say,
 No sound of speech had Adam caught,
 But whistled like a bird all day,—
 And maybe 'twas for want of thought:
 But Nature, with resistless laws,
 Made Adam soon surpass the birds;
 She gave him lovely Eve because
 If he'd a wife they must *have words*.

And so the native land, I hold,
 By male descent is proudly mine;
 The language, as the tale hath told,
 Was given in the female line.
 And thus we see on either hand
 We name our blessings whence they've sprung;
 We call our country Father Land,
 We call our language Mother Tongue.

Samuel Lover [1797-1868]

THE FATHERLAND

WHERE is the true man's fatherland?
 Is it where he by chance is born?
 Doth not the yearning spirit scorn
 In such scant borders to be spanned?
 Oh, yes! his fatherland must be
 As the blue heaven wide and free!

Is it alone where freedom is,
 Where God is God and man is man?
 Doth he not claim a broader span
 For the soul's love of home than this?
 Oh, yes! his fatherland must be
 As the blue heaven wide and free!

Where'er a human heart doth wear
 Joy's myrtle-wreath or sorrow's gyves,
 Where'er a human spirit strives

After a life more true and fair,
There is the true man's birthplace grand,
His is a world-wide fatherland!

Where'er a single slave doth pine,
Where'er one man may help another,—
Thank God for such a birthright, brother,—
That spot of earth is thine and mine!
There is the true man's birthplace grand,
His is a world-wide fatherland!

James Russell Lowell [1819-1891]

NARRATIVE AND DESCRIPTIVE POEMS

THE DESERTED VILLAGE

SWEET Auburn! loveliest village of the plain,
Where health and plenty cheered the laboring swain,
Where smiling spring its earliest visit paid,
And parting summer's lingering blooms delayed:
Dear lovely bowers of innocence and ease,
Seats of my youth, when every sport could please:
How often have I loitered o'er thy green,
Where humble happiness endeared each scene!
How often have I paused on every charm,
The sheltered cot, the cultivated farm,
The never-failing brook, the busy mill,
The decent church that topped the neighboring hill,
The hawthorn-bush, with seats beneath the shade,
For talking age and whispering lovers made!
How often have I blessed the coming day,
When toil remitting lent its turn to play,
And all the village train, from labor free,
Led up their sports beneath the spreading tree:
While many a pastime circled in the shade,
The young contending as the old surveyed;
And many a gambol frolicked o'er the ground,
And sleights of art and feats of strength went round:
And still, as each repeated pleasure tired,
Succeeding sports the mirthful band inspired;
The dancing pair that simply sought renown,
By holding out, to tire each other down;
The swain mistrustless of his smuttred face,
While secret laughter tittered round the place;
The bashful virgin's sidelong looks of love,
The matron's glance that would those looks reprove,—

These were thy charms, sweet village! sports like these,
With sweet succession, taught e'en toil to please;
These, round thy bowers their cheerful influence shed,
These were thy charms,—but all these charms are fled!

Sweet smiling village, loveliest of the lawn,
Thy sports are fled, and all thy charms withdrawn;
Amidst thy bowers the tyrant's hand is seen,
And desolation saddens all thy green;
One only master grasps the whole domain,
And half a tillage stints thy smiling plain;
No more thy glassy brook reflects the day,
But, choked with sedges, works its weedy way;
Along thy glades, a solitary guest,
The hollow-sounding bittern guards its nest;
Amidst thy desert-walks the lapwing flies,
And tires their echoes with unvaried cries.
Sunk are thy bowers in shapeless ruin all,
And the long grass o'ertops the moldering wall,
And, trembling, shrinking from the spoiler's hand,
Far, far away thy children leave the land.

Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,
Where wealth accumulates, and men decay:
Princes and lords may flourish, or may fade;
A breath can make them, as a breath has made;
But a bold peasantry, their country's pride,
When once destroyed, can never be supplied.

A time there was, ere England's griefs began,
When every rood of ground maintained its man;
For him light Labor spread her wholesome store,
Just gave what life required, but gave no more:
His best companions, innocence and health;
And his best riches, ignorance of wealth.

But times are altered: trade's unfeeling train
Usurp the land and dispossess the swain;
Along the lawn, where scattered hamlets rose,
Unwieldy wealth and cumbrous pomp repose,
And every want to luxury allied,
And every pang that folly pays to pride.

3066 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

Those gentle hours that plenty bade to bloom,
Those calm desires that asked but little room,
Those healthful sports that graced the peaceful scene,
Lived in each look, and brightened all the green,—
These, far departing, seek a kinder shore,
And rural mirth and manners are no more.

Sweet Auburn! parent of the blissful hour,
Thy glades forlorn confess the tyrant's power.
Here, as I take my solitary rounds,
Amidst thy tangling walks and ruined grounds,
And, many a year elapsed, return to view
Where once the cottage stood, the hawthorn grew,
Remembrance wakes, with all her busy train,
Swells at my breast, and turns the past to pain.

In all my wanderings round this world of care,
In all my griefs—and God has given my share—
I still had hopes my latest hours to crown,
Amidst these humble bowers to lay me down;
To husband out life's taper at the close,
And keep the flame from wasting by repose;
I still had hopes—for pride attends us still—
Amidst the swains to show my book-learned skill,
Around my fire an evening group to draw,
And tell of all I felt and all I saw;
And, as a hare, whom hounds and horns pursue,
Pants to the place from whence at first she flew,
I still had hopes, my long vexations past,
Here to return,—and die at home at last.

O blest retirement! friend to life's decline,
Retreats from care, that never must be mine,
How blest is he who crowns in shades like these
A youth of labor with an age of ease;
Who quits a world where strong temptations try,
And, since 'tis hard to combat, learns to fly!
For him no wretches, born to work and weep,
Explore the mine, or tempt the dangerous deep;
No surly porter stands in guilty state,
To spurn imploring famine from the gate:

But on he moves to meet his latter end,
Angels around befriending virtue's friend;
Sinks to the grave with unperceived decay,
While Resignation gently slopes the way;
And, all his prospects brightening to the last,
His heaven commences ere the world be past.

Sweet was the sound, when oft, at evening's close,
Up yonder hill the village murmur rose;
There, as I passed with careless steps and slow,
The mingling notes came softened from below;
The swain responsive as the milkmaid sung,
The sober herd that lowed to meet their young;
The noisy geese that gabbled o'er the pool,
The playful children just let loose from school;
The watch-dog's voice that bayed the whispering wind,
And the loud laugh that spoke the vacant mind,—
These all in sweet confusion sought the shade,
And filled each pause the nightingale had made.
But now the sounds of population fail,
No cheerful murmurs fluctuate in the gale,
No busy steps the grass-grown foot-way tread,
But all the bloomy flush of life is fled.
All but yon widowed, solitary thing,
That feebly bends beside the plashy spring;
She, wretched matron, forced in age, for bread,
To strip the brook with mantling cresses spread,
To pick her wintry fagot from the thorn,
To seek her nightly shed, and weep till morn;
She only left of all the harmless train,
The sad historian of the pensive plain.

Near yonder copse, where once the garden smiled,
And still where many a garden-flower grows wild;
There, where a few torn shrubs the place disclose,
The village preacher's modest mansion rose.
A man he was to all the country dear,
And passing rich with forty pounds a year;
Remote from towns he ran his godly race,
Nor e'er had changed, nor wished to change, his place;

Unskillful he to fawn, or seek for power,
 By doctrines fashioned to the varying hour;
 Far other aims his heart had learned to prize,
 More skilled to raise the wretched than to rise.
 His house was known to all the vagrant train.
 He chid their wanderings, but relieved their pain;
 The long-remembered beggar was his guest,
 Whose beard descending swept his aged breast;
 The ruined spendthrift, now no longer proud,
 Claimed kindred there, and had his claims allowed;
 The broken soldier, kindly bade to stay,
 Sate by his fire, and talked the night away;
 Wept o'er his wounds, or, tales of sorrow done,
 Shouldered his crutch, and showed how fields were won.
 Pleased with his guests, the good man learned to glow,
 And quite forgot their vices in their woe;
 Careless their merits or their faults to scan,
 His pity gave ere charity began.

Thus to relieve the wretched was his pride,
 And e'en his failings leaned to Virtue's side;
 But in his duty prompt at every call,
 He watched and wept, he prayed and felt for all;
 And, as a bird each fond endearment tries,
 To tempt its new-fledged offspring to the skies,
 He tried each art, reproved each dull delay,
 Allured to brighter worlds, and led the way.

Beside the bed where parting life was laid,
 And sorrow, guilt, and pain, by turns dismayed,
 The reverend champion stood. At his control,
 Despair and anguish fled the struggling soul;
 Comfort came down the trembling wretch to raise,
 And his last faltering accents whispered praise.

At church, with meek and unaffected grace,
 His looks adorned the venerable place;
 Truth from his lips prevailed with double sway,
 And fools, who came to scoff, remained to pray.
 The service past, around the pious man,
 With steady zeal, each honest rustic ran;

E'en children followed, with endearing wile,
And plucked his gown, to share the good man's smile.
His ready smile a parent's warmth expressed,
Their welfare pleased him, and their cares distressed;
To them his heart, his love, his griefs were given,
But all his serious thoughts had rest in heaven.
As some tall cliff, that lifts its awful form,
Swells from the vale, and midway leaves the storm,
Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,
Eternal sunshine settles on its head.

Beside yon straggling fence that skirts the way,
With blossomed furze unprofitably gay,
There, in his noisy mansion, skilled to rule,
The village master taught his little school;
A man severe he was, and stern to view;
I knew him well, and every truant knew:
Well had the boding tremblers learned to trace
The day's disasters in his morning face;
Full well they laughed, with counterfeited glee,
At all his jokes, for many a joke had he;
Full well the busy whisper, circling round,
Conveyed the dismal tidings when he frowned;
Yet he was kind, or, if severe in aught,
The love he bore to learning was in fault.
The village all declared how much he knew;
'Twas certain he could write, and cipher too;
Lands he could measure, terms and tides presage,
And e'en the story ran that he could gauge;
In arguing, too, the parson owned his skill,
For, e'en though vanquished, he could argue still,
While words of learnèd length and thundering sound
Amazed the gazing rustics ranged around;
And still they gazed, and still the wonder grew
That one small head could carry all he knew.

But past is all his fame. The very spot
Where many a time he triumphed, is forgot.—
Near yonder thorn, that lifts its head on high,
Where once the sign-post caught the passing eye,

3070 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

Low lies that house where nut-brown draughts inspired,
 Where graybeard mirth and smiling toil retired,
 Where village statesmen talked with looks profound,
 And news much older than their ale went round.
 Imagination fondly stoops to trace
 The parlor splendors of that festive place,—
 The whitewashed wall; the nicely sanded floor;
 The varnished clock that ticked behind the door;
 The chest, contrived a double debt to pay,
 A bed by night, a chest of drawers by day;
 The pictures placed for ornament and use;
 The twelve good rules; the royal game of goose;
 The hearth, except when winter chilled the day,
 With aspen boughs and flowers and fennel gay;
 While broken teacups, wisely kept for show,
 Ranged o'er the chimney, glistened in a row.

Vain, transitory splendors! could not all
 Reprieve the tottering mansion from its fall?
 Obscure it sinks, nor shall it more impart
 An hour's importance to the poor man's heart;
 Thither no more the peasant shall repair
 To sweet oblivion of his daily care;
 No more the farmer's news, the barber's tale,
 No more the woodman's ballad shall prevail;
 No more the smith his dusky brow shall clear,
 Relax his ponderous strength, and lean to hear;
 The host himself no longer shall be found
 Careful to see the mantling bliss go round;
 Nor the coy maid, half willing to be pressed,
 Shall kiss the cup to pass it to the rest.

Yes! let the rich deride, the proud disdain,
 These simple blessings of the lowly train;
 To me more dear, congenial to my heart,
 One native charm, than all the gloss of art.
 Spontaneous joys, where nature has its play,
 The soul adopts, and owns their first-born sway;
 Lightly they frolic o'er the vacant mind,
 Unenvied, unmolested, unconfined:

But the long pomp, the midnight masquerade,
With all the freaks of wanton wealth arrayed,—
In these, ere triflers half their wish obtain,
The toiling pleasure sickens into pain;
And, e'en while fashion's brightest arts decoy,
The heart, distrusting, asks if this be joy.

Ye friends to truth, ye statesmen, who survey
The rich man's joys increase, the poor's decay,
'Tis yours to judge, how wide the limits stand
Between a splendid and a happy land.
Proud swells the tide with loads of freighted ore,
And shouting Folly hails them from her shore;
Hoards e'en beyond the miser's wish abound,
And rich men flock from all the world around.
Yet count our gains. This wealth is but a name
That leaves our useful products still the same.
Not so the loss. The man of wealth and pride
Takes up a space that many poor supplied;
Space for his lake, his park's extended bounds,
Space for his horses, equipage, and hounds:
The robe that wraps his limbs in silken sloth
Has robbed the neighboring fields of half their growth;
His seat, where solitary sports are seen,
Indignant spurns the cottage from the green;
Around the world each needful product flies,
For all the luxuries the world supplies:
While thus the land, adorned for pleasure all,
In barren splendor feebly waits the fall.

As some fair female, unadorned and plain,
Secure to please while youth confirms her reign,
Slights every borrowed charm that dress supplies,
Nor shares with art the triumph of her eyes,
But when those charms are past,—for charms are frail,—
When time advances, and when lovers fail,
She then shines forth, solicitous to bless,
In all the gleaming impotence of dress;
Thus fares the land, by luxury betrayed,
In nature's simplest charms at first arrayed,

But verging to decline, its splendors rise,
 Its vistas strike, its palaces surprise;
 While, scourged by famine from the smiling land,
 The mournful peasant leads his humble band;
 And while he sinks, without one arm to save,
 The country blooms,—a garden and a grave.

Where then, ah! where shall poverty reside,
 To 'scape the pressure of contiguous pride?
 If to some common's fenceless limits strayed,
 He drives his flock to pick the scanty blade,
 Those fenceless fields the sons of wealth divide,
 And e'en the bare-worn common is denied.
 If to the city sped,—what waits him there?
 To see profusion that he must not share;
 To see ten thousand baneful arts combined
 To pamper luxury and thin mankind;
 To see each joy the sons of pleasure know
 Extorted from his fellow-creature's woe.
 Here while the courtier glitters in brocade,
 There the pale artist plies the sickly trade;
 Here while the proud their long-drawn pomps display,
 There the black gibbet glooms beside the way.
 The dome where Pleasure holds her midnight reign,
 Here, richly decked, admits the gorgeous train;
 Tumultuous grandeur crowds the blazing square,
 The rattling chariots clash, the torches glare.
 Sure scenes like these no troubles e'er annoy!
 Sure these denote one universal joy!
 Are these thy serious thoughts?—Ah, turn thine eyes
 Where the poor houseless shivering female lies.
 She once, perhaps, in village plenty blest,
 Has wept at tales of innocence distressed;
 Her modest looks the cottage might adorn,
 Sweet as the primrose peeps beneath the thorn;
 Now lost to all, her friends, her virtue fled,
 Near her betrayer's door she lays her head,
 And, pinched with cold, and shrinking from the shower,
 With heavy heart deplores that luckless hour,
 When idly first, ambitious of the town,
 She left her wheel and robes of country brown.

Do thine, sweet Auburn, thine, the loveliest train,
Do thy fair tribes participate her pain?
E'en now, perhaps, by cold and hunger led,
At proud men's doors they ask a little bread!

Ah, no! To distant climes, a dreary scene,
Where half the convex world intrudes between,
Through torrid tracts with fainting steps they go,
Where wild Altama murmurs to their woe.
Far different there from all that charmed before,
The various terrors of that horrid shore,—
Those blazing suns that dart a downward ray,
And fiercely shed intolerable day;
Those matted woods where birds forget to sing,
But silent bats in drowsy clusters cling;
Those poisonous fields with rank luxuriance crowned,
Where the dark scorpion gathers death around;
Where at each step the stranger fears to wake
The rattling terrors of the vengeful snake;
Where crouching tigers wait their hapless prey,
And savage men more murderous still than they;
While oft in whirls the mad tornado flies,
Mingling the ravaged landscape with the skies.
Far different these from every former scene,
The cooling brook, the grassy-vested green,
The breezy covert of the warbling grove,
That only sheltered thefts of harmless love.

Good Heaven! what sorrows gloomed that parting day
That called them from their native walks away;
When the poor exiles, every pleasure past,
Hung round the bowers, and fondly looked their last,
And took a long farewell, and wished in vain
For seats like these beyond the western main;
And, shuddering still to face the distant deep,
Returned and wept, and still returned to weep.
The good old sire the first prepared to go
To new-found worlds, and wept for others' woe;
But for himself, in conscious virtue brave,
He only wished for worlds beyond the grave.

3074 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

His lovely daughter, lovelier in her tears,
 The fond companion of his helpless years,
 Silent went next, neglectful of her charms,
 And left a lover's for a father's arms.
 With louder plaints the mother spoke her woes,
 And blessed the cot where every pleasure rose;
 And kissed her thoughtless babes with many a tear,
 And clasped them close, in sorrow doubly dear;
 Whilst her fond husband strove to lend relief
 In all the silent manliness of grief.

O Luxury! thou cursed by Heaven's decree,
 How ill exchanged are things like these for thee!
 How do thy potions, with insidious joy,
 Diffuse their pleasures only to destroy!
 Kingdoms by thee, to sickly greatness grown,
 Boast of a florid vigor not their own.
 At every draught more large and large they grow,
 A bloated mass of rank, unwieldy woe;
 Till, sapped their strength, and every part unsound,
 Down, down they sink, and spread a ruin round.

E'en now the devastation is begun,
 And half the business of destruction done;
 Even now, methinks, as pondering here I stand,
 I see the rural virtues leave the land.
 Down where yon anchoring vessel spreads the sail
 That idly waiting flaps with every gale,
 Downward they move, a melancholy band,
 Pass from the shore, and darken all the strand.
 Contented toil, and hospitable care,
 And kind connubial tenderness, are there;
 And piety with wishes placed above,
 And steady loyalty, and faithful love.
 And thou, sweet Poetry, thou loveliest maid,
 Still first to fly where sensual joys invade;
 Unfit, in these degenerate times of shame,
 To catch the heart, or strike for honest fame;
 Dear charming nymph, neglected and decried,
 My shame in crowds, my solitary pride;

Thou source of all my bliss and all my woe,
 That found'st me poor at first, and keep'st me so;
 Thou guide, by which the nobler arts excel,
 Thou nurse of every virtue, fare thee well!
 Farewell; and oh, where'er thy voice be tried,
 On Torno's cliffs, on Pambamarca's side,
 Whether where equinoctial fervors glow,
 Or winter wraps the polar world in snow,
 Still let thy voice, prevailing over time,
 Redress the rigors of the inclement clime;
 Aid slighted truth with thy persuasive strain;
 Teach erring man to spurn the rage of gain;
 Teach him, that states of native strength possessed,
 Though very poor, may still be very blest;
 That trade's proud empire hastes to swift decay,
 As ocean sweeps the labored mole away;
 While self-dependent power can time defy,
 As rocks resist the billows and the sky.

Oliver Goldsmith [1728-1774]

THE PRISONER OF CHILLON: A FABLE

SONNET ON CHILLON

ETERNAL Spirit of the chainless Mind!
 Brightest in dungeons, Liberty, thou art,
 For there thy habitation is the heart—
 The heart which love of thee alone can bind;
 And when thy sons to fetters are consigned—
 To fetters, and the damp vault's dayless gloom—
 Their country conquers with their martyrdom,
 And Freedom's fame finds wings on every wind.
 Chillon! thy prison is a holy place,
 And thy sad floor an altar; for 'twas trod,
 Until his very steps have left a trace
 Worn, as if thy cold pavement were a sod,
 By Bonnivard!—May none those marks efface!
 For they appeal from tyranny to God.

I

My hair is gray, but not with years,
 Nor grew it white
 In a single night,
 As men's have grown from sudden fears.
 My limbs are bowed, though not with toil,
 But rusted with a vile repose,
 For they have been a dungcon's spoil,
 And mine has been the fate of those
 To whom the goodly earth and air
 Are banned and barred—forbidden fare.
 But this was for my father's faith,
 I suffered chains and courted death.
 That father perished at the stake
 For tenets he would not forsake;
 And for the same his lineal race
 In darkness found a dwelling-place.
 We were seven,—who now are one—
 Six in youth, and one in age,
 Finished as they had begun,
 Proud of Persecution's rage:
 One in fire, and two in field,
 Their belief with blood have sealed—
 Dying as their father died,
 For the God their foes denied;
 Three were in a dungeon cast,
 Of whom this wreck is left the last.

II

There are seven pillars, of Gothic mold,
 In Chillon's dungeons deep and old;
 There are seven columns, massy and gray,
 Dim with a dull imprisoned ray—
 A sunbeam which hath lost its way,
 And through the crevice and the cleft
 Of the thick wall is fallen and left,
 Creeping o'er the floor so damp,
 Like a marsh's meteor-lamp.

And in each pillar there is a ring,
And in each ring there is a chain:
That iron is a cankering thing,
For in these limbs its teeth remain,
With marks that will not wear away
Till I have done with this new day,
Which now is painful to these eyes,
Which have not seen the sun so rise
For years—I cannot count them o'er;
I lost their long and heavy score
When my last brother drooped and died,
And I lay living by his side.

III

They chained us each to a column stone,
And we were three—yet, each alone;
We could not move a single pace;
We could not see each other's face,
But with that pale and livid light
That made us strangers in our sight;
And thus together, yet apart,
Fettered in hand, but joined in heart,
'Twas still some solace, in the dearth
Of the pure elements of earth,
To hearken to each other's speech,
And each turn comforter to each
With some new hope or legend old,
Or song heroically bold;
But even these at length grew cold.
Our voices took a dreary tone,
An echo of the dungeon-stone,
A grating sound—not full and free,
As they of yore were wont to be;
It might be fancy—but to me
They never sounded like our own.

IV

I was the eldest of the three,
And to uphold and cheer the rest
I ought to do, and did, my best—
And each did well in his degree.

The youngest, whom my father loved,
 Because our mother's brow was given
 To him, with eyes as blue as heaven—

For him my soul was sorely moved;
 And truly might it be distressed
 To see such bird in such a nest;
 For he was beautiful as day

(When day was beautiful to me
 As to young eagles, being free),—
 A polar day, which will not see
 A sunset till its summer's gone—

Its sleepless summer of long light,
 The snow-clad offspring of the sun:

And thus he was as pure and bright,
 And in his natural spirit gay,
 With tears for naught but others' ills;
 And then they flowed like mountain rills,
 Unless he could assuage the woe
 Which he abhorred to view below.

V

The other was as pure of mind,
 But formed to combat with his kind;
 Strong in his frame, and of a mood
 Which 'gainst the world in war had stood,
 And perished in the foremost rank

With joy; but not in chains to pine.
 His spirit withered with their clank;

I saw it silently decline—

And so, perchance, in sooth, did mine:
 But yet I forced it on, to cheer
 Those relics of a home so dear.
 He was a hunter of the hills,

Had followed there the deer and wolf;
 To him this dungeon was a gulf,
 And fettered feet the worst of ills.

VI

Lake Lemman lies by Chillon's walls,
 A thousand feet in depth below,
 Its massy waters meet and flow;

Thus much the fathom-line was sent
 From Chillon's snow-white battlement,
 Which round about the wave enthralls;
 A double dungeon wall and wave
 Have made—and like a living grave,
 Below the surface of the lake
 The dark vault lies wherein we lay;
 We heard it ripple night and day;
 Sounding o'er our heads it knocked.
 And I have felt the winter's spray
 Wash through the bars when winds were high,
 And wanton in the happy sky;
 And then the very rock hath rocked,
 And I have felt it shake, unshocked;
 Because I could have smiled to see
 The death that would have set me free.

VII

I said my nearer brother pined;
 I said his mighty heart declined.
 He loathed and put away his food;
 It was not that 'twas coarse and rude,
 For we were used to hunters' fare,
 And for the like had little care.
 The milk drawn from the mountain goat
 Was changed for water from the moat;
 Our bread was such as captives' tears
 Have moistened many a thousand years,
 Since man first pent his fellow-men,
 Like brutes, within an iron den.
 But what were these to us or him?
 These wasted not his heart or limb;
 My brother's soul was of that mold
 Which in a palace had grown cold,
 Had his free breathing been denied
 The range of the steep mountain's side.
 But why delay the truth?—he died.
 I saw, and could not hold his head,
 Nor reach his dying hand—nor dead,—
 Though hard I strove, but strove in vain,

To rend and gnash my bonds in twain.
 He died—and they unlocked his chain,
 And scooped for him a shallow grave
 Even from the cold earth of our cave.
 I begged them, as a boon, to lay
 His corse in dust whereon the day
 Might shine—it was a foolish thought;
 But then within my brain it wrought,
 That even in death his freeborn breast
 In such a dungeon could not rest.
 I might have spared my idle prayer—
 They coldly laughed, and laid him there,
 The flat and turfless earth above
 The being we so much did love;
 His empty chain above it leant—
 Such murder's fitting monument!

VIII

But he, the favorite and the flower,
 Most cherished since his natal hour,
 His mother's image in fair face,
 The infant love of all his race,
 His martyred father's dearest thought,
 My latest care, for whom I sought
 To hoard my life, that his might be
 Less wretched now, and one day free—
 He too, who yet had held untired
 A spirit natural or inspired—
 He, too, was struck, and day by day
 Was withered on the stalk away.
 Oh, God! it is a fearful thing
 To see the human soul take wing
 In any shape, in any mood:
 I've seen it rushing forth in blood;
 I've seen it on the breaking ocean
 Strive with a swoln, convulsive motion;
 I've seen the sick and ghastly bed
 Of Sin, delirious with its dread;
 But these were horrors,—this was woe
 Unmixed with such,—but sure and slow.

He faded, and so calm and meek,
So softly worn, so sweetly weak,
So tearless, yet so tender,—kind,
And grieved for those he left behind;
With all the while a cheek whose bloom
Was as a mockery of the tomb,
Whose tints as gently sunk away
As a departing rainbow's ray;
An eye of most transparent light,
That almost made the dungeon bright;
And not a word of murmur, not
A groan o'er his untimely lot—
A little talk of better days,
A little hope my own to raise;
For I was sunk in silence, lost
In this last loss, of all the most.
And then the sighs he would suppress
Of fainting nature's feebleness,
More slowly drawn, grew less and less.
I listened, but I could not hear—
I called, for I was wild with fear;
I knew 'twas hopeless, but my dread
Would not be thus admonishèd;
I called, and thought I heard a sound—
I burst my chain with one strong bound,
And rushed to him:—I found him not.
I only stirred in this black spot;
I only lived—*I* only drew
The accursèd breath of dungeon-dew;
The last, the sole, the dearest link
Between me and the eternal brink,
Which bound me to my failing race,
Was broken in this fatal place.
One on the earth, and one beneath—
My brothers—both had ceased to breathe.
I took that hand which lay so still—
Alas! my own was full as chill;
I had not strength to stir, or strive,
But felt that I was still alive—
A frantic feeling, when we know

That what we love shall ne'er be so.
 I know not why
 I could not die,
 I had no earthly hope,—but faith,
 And that forbade a selfish death.

IX

What next befell me then and there
 I know not well,—I never knew.
 First came the loss of light and air,
 And then of darkness too.
 I had no thought, no feeling—none:
 Among the stones I stood a stone;
 And was, scarce conscious what I wist,
 As shrubless crags within the mist;
 For all was blank, and bleak, and gray;
 It was not night—it was not day;
 It was not even the dungeon-light,
 So hateful to my heavy sight;
 But vacancy absorbing space,
 And fixedness,—without a place;
 There were no stars, no earth, no time,
 No check, no change, no good, no crime,—
 But silence, and a stirless breath
 Which neither was of life nor death—
 A sea of stagnant idleness,
 Blind, boundless, mute and motionless!

X

A light broke in upon my brain—
 It was the carol of a bird;
 It ceased, and then it came again—
 The sweetest song ear ever heard;
 And mine was thankful till my eyes
 Ran over with the glad surprise,
 And they that moment could not see
 I was the mate of misery;
 But then, by dull degrees, came back

My senses to their wonted track:
I saw the dungeon walls and floor
Close slowly round me as before;
I saw the glimmer of the sun
Creeping as it before had done;
But through the crevice where it came
That bird was perched, as fond and tame,
And tamer than upon the tree—
A lovely bird, with azure wings,
And song that said a thousand things,
And seemed to say them all for me!
I never saw its like before—
I ne'er shall see its likeness more.
It seemed, like me, to want a mate,
But was not half so desolate;
And it was come to love me when
None lived to love me so again,
And, cheering from my dungeon's brink,
Had brought me back to feel and think.
I know not if it late were free,
Or broke its cage to perch on mine;
But knowing well captivity,
Sweet bird! I could not wish for thine!
Or if it were, in wingèd guise,
A visitant from Paradise;
For—Heaven forgive that thought, the while
Which made me both to weep and smile!—
I sometimes deemed that it might be
My brother's soul come down to me;
But then at last away it flew,
And then 'twas mortal—well I knew;
For he would never thus have flown,
And left me twice so doubly lone—
Lone—as the corse within its shroud,
Lone—as a solitary cloud,
A single cloud on a sunny day,
While all the rest of heaven is clear,
A frown upon the atmosphere,
That hath no business to appear
When skies are blue, and earth is gay.

XI

A kind of change came in my fate—
 My keepers grew compassionate.
 I know not what had made them so—
 They were inured to sights of woe;
 But so it was—my broken chain
 With links unfastened did remain;
 And it was liberty to stride
 Along my cell from side to side,
 And up and down, and then athwart,
 And tread it over every part;
 And round the pillars one by one,
 Returning where my walk begun—
 Avoiding only, as I trod,
 My brothers' graves without a sod;
 For if I thought with heedless tread
 My step profaned their lowly bed,
 My breath came gaspingly and thick,
 And my crushed heart fell blind and sick.

XII

I made a footing in the wall:
 It was not therefrom to escape,
 For I had buried one and all
 Who loved me in a human shape;
 And the whole earth would henceforth be
 A wider prison unto me;
 No child, no sire, no kin had I,
 No partner in my misery.
 I thought of this, and I was glad,
 For thought of them had made me mad;
 But I was curious to ascend
 To my barred windows, and to bend
 Once more, upon the mountains high,
 The quiet of a loving eye.

XIII

I saw them—and they were the same;
 They were not changed, like me, in frame;

I saw their thousand years of snow
On high—their wide, long lake below,
And the blue Rhone in fullest flow;
I heard the torrents leap and gush
O'er channeled rock and broken bush;
I saw the white-walled distant town,
And whiter sails go skimming down;
And then there was a little isle,
Which in my very face did smile—

 The only one in view;
A small, green isle, it seemed no more,
Scarce broader than my dungeon floor;
But in it there were three tall trees,
And o'er it blew the mountain breeze,
And by it there were waters flowing,
And on it there were young flowers growing
 Of gentle breath and hue.

The fish swam by the castle wall,
And they seemed joyous, each and all;
The eagle rode the rising blast—
Methought he never flew so fast
As then to me he seemed to fly;
And then new tears came in my eye,
And I felt troubled, and would fain
I had not left my recent chain;
And when I did descend again,
The darkness of my dim abode
Fell on me as a heavy load;
It was as is a new-dug grave,
Closing o'er one we sought to save;
And yet my glance, too much oppressed,
Had almost need of such a rest.

XIV

It might be months, or years, or days—
 I kept no count, I took no note—
I had no hope my eyes to raise,
 And clear them of their dreary mote;
At last men came to set me free,
 I asked not why, and recked not where;

It was at length the same to me,
 Fettered or fetterless to be;
 I learned to love despair.
 And thus, when they appeared at last,
 And all my bonds aside were cast,
 These heavy walls to me had grown
 A hermitage—and all my own!
 And half I felt as they were come
 To tear me from a second home.
 With spiders I had friendship made,
 And watched them in their sullen trade;
 Had seen the mice by moonlight play—
 And why should I feel less than they?
 We were all inmates of one place,
 And I, the monarch of each race,
 Had power to kill; yet, strange to tell
 In quiet we had learned to dwell.
 My very chains and I grew friends,
 So much a long communion tends
 To make us what we are:—even I
 Regained my freedom with a sigh.

George Gordon Byron [1788–1824]

THE EVE OF ST. AGNES

ST. AGNES' EVE—Ah, bitter chill it was!
 The owl, for all his feathers, was a-cold;
 The hare limped trembling through the frozen grass,
 And silent was the flock in woolly fold:
 Numb were the Beadsman's fingers, while he told
 His rosary, and while his frosted breath,
 Like pious incense from a censer old,
 Seemed taking flight for heaven, without a death,
 Past the sweet Virgin's picture, while his prayer he saith.

His prayer he saith, this patient, holy man;
 Then takes his lamp, and riseth from his knees,
 And back returneth, meager, barefoot, wan,
 Along the chapel aisle by slow degrees:
 The sculptured dead, on each side, seem to freeze,

Emprisoned in black, purgatorial rails:
Knights, ladies, praying in dumb orat'ries,
He passeth by; and his weak spirit fails
To think how they may ache in icy hoods and mails.

Northward he turneth through a little door,
And scarce three steps, ere Music's golden tongue
Flattered to tears this agèd man and poor;
But no—already had his death-bell rung;
The joys of all his life were said and sung;
His was harsh penance on St. Agnes' Eve:
Another way he went, and soon among
Rough ashes sat he for his soul's reprieve,
And all night kept awake, for sinners' sake to grieve.

That ancient Beadsman heard the prelude soft;
And so it chanced, for many a door was wide,
From hurry to and fro. Soon, up aloft,
The silver, snarling trumpets 'gan to chide:
The level chambers, ready with their pride,
Were glowing to receive a thousand guests:
The carvèd angels, ever eager-eyed,
Stared, where upon their heads the cornice rests,
With hair blown back, and wings put cross-wise on their
breasts.

At length burst in the argent revelry,
With plume, tiara, and all rich array,
Numerous as shadows haunting faerily
The brain, newstuffed in youth, with triumphs gay
Of old romance. These let us wish away,
And turn, sole-thoughted, to one Lady there,
Whose heart had brooded, all that wintry day,
On love, and winged St. Agnes' saintly care,
As she had heard old dames full many times declare.

They told her how, upon St. Agnes' eve,
Young virgins might have visions of delight,
And soft adorings from their loves receive
Upon the honeyed middle of the night,

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If ceremonies due they did aright;
 As, supperless to bed they must retire,
 And couch supine their beauties, lily white;
 Nor look behind, nor sideways, but require
 Of Heaven with upward eyes for all that they desire.

Full of this whim was thoughtful Madeline:
 The music, yearning like a God in pain,
 She scarcely heard: her maiden eyes divine
 Fixed on the floor, saw many a sweeping train
 Pass by—she heeded not at all: in vain
 Came many a tiptoe, amorous cavalier,
 And back retired; not cooled by high disdain,
 But she saw not: her heart was elsewhere:
 She sighed for Agnes' dreams, the sweetest of the year.

She danced along with vague, regardless eyes,
 Anxious her lips, her breathing quick and short:
 The hallowed hour was near at hand: she sighs
 Amid the timbrels, and the thronged resort
 Of whisperers in anger, or in sport;
 'Mid looks of love, defiance, hate, and scorn,
 Hoodwinked with faery fancy; all amorn,
 Save to St. Agnes and her lambs unshorn,
 And all the bliss to be before to-morrow morn.

So, purposing each moment to retire,
 She lingered still. Meantime, across the moors,
 Had come young Porphyro, with heart on fire
 For Madeline. Beside the portal doors,
 Buttressed from moonlight, stands he, and implores
 All saints to give him sight of Madeline,
 But for one moment in the tedious hours,
 That he might gaze and worship all unseen;
 Perchance speak, kneel, touch, kiss—in sooth such things
 have been.

He ventures in: let no buzzed whisper tell:
 All eyes be muffled, or a hundred swords
 Will storm his heart, Love's feverous citadel:
 For him, those chambers held barbarian hordes,

Hyena foemen, and hot-blooded lords,
Whose very dogs would execrations howl
Against his lineage: not one breast affords
Him any mercy, in that mansion foul,
Save one old beldame, weak in body and in soul.

Ah, happy chance! the agèd creature came,
Shuffling along with ivory-headed wand,
To where he stood, hid from the torch's flame,
Behind a broad hall-pillar, far beyond
The sound of merriment and chorus bland:
He startled her; but soon she knew his face,
And grasped his fingers in her palsied hand,
Saying, "Mercy, Porphyro! hie thee from this place;
They are all here to-night, the whole blood-thirsty race!

"Get hence! get hence! there's dwarfish Hildebrand:
He had a fever late, and in the fit
He cursèd thee and thine, both house and land:
Then there's that old Lord Maurice, not a whit
More tame for his gray hairs—Alas me! flit!
Flit like a ghost away."—"Ah, Gossip, dear,
We're safe enough; here in this armchair sit,
And tell me how"—"Good Saints! not here, not here:
Follow me, child, or else these stones will be thy bier."

He followed through a lowly archèd way,
Brushing the cobwebs with his lofty plume,
And as she muttered "Well-a-well-a-day!"
He found him in a little moonlight room,
Pale, latticed, chill, and silent as a tomb.
"Now tell me where is Madeline," said he,
"O tell me, Angela, by the holy loom,
Which none but secret sisterhood may see,
When they St. Agnes' wool are weaving piously."

"St. Agnes! Ah! it is St. Agnes' Eve—
Yet men will murder upon holy days:
Thou must hold water in a witch's sieve,
And be liege-lord of all the Elves and Fays,

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To venture so: it fills me with amaze
 To see thee, Porphyro!—St. Agnes' Eve!
 God's help! my lady fair the conjurer plays
 This very night: good angels her deceive!
 But let me laugh awhile,—I've mickle time to grieve."

Feebly she laugheth in the languid moon,
 While Porphyro upon her face doth look,
 Like puzzled urchin on an aged crone
 Who keepeth closed a wondrous riddle-book,
 As spectacted she sits in chimney nook.
 But soon his eyes grew brilliant, when she told
 His lady's purpose; and he scarce could brook
 Tears, at the thought of those enchantments cold,
 And Madeline asleep in lap of legends old.

Sudden a thought came like a full-blown rose,
 Flushing his brow, and in his pained heart
 Made purple riot: then doth he propose
 A stratagem, that makes the beldame start:
 "A cruel man and impious thou art:
 Sweet lady! let her pray, and sleep, and dream
 Alone with her good angels, far apart
 From wicked men like thee. Go, go!—I deem
 Thou canst not surely be the same that thou didst seem."

"I will not harm her, by all saints I swear,"
 Quoth Porphyro: "O may I ne'er find grace
 When my weak voice shall whisper its last prayer,
 If one of her soft ringlets I displace,
 Or look with ruffian passion in her face.
 Good Angela, believe me, by these tears;
 Or I will, even in a moment's space,
 Awake, with horrid shout, my foemen's ears,
 And beard them, though they be more fanged than wolves
 and bears."

"Ah! why wilt thou affright a feeble soul?
 A poor, weak, palsy-stricken, churchyard thing,
 Whose passing-bell may ere the midnight toll;
 Whose prayers for thee, each morn and evening,

Were never missed."—Thus plaining, doth she bring
A gentler speech from burning Porphyro;
So woeful, and of such deep sorrowing,
That Angela gives promise she will do
Whatever he shall wish, betide her weal or woe.

Which was, to lead him, in close secrecy,
Even to Madeline's chamber, and there hide
Him in a closet, of such privacy
That he might see her beauty unespied,
And win perhaps that night a peerless bride,
While legioned fairies paced the coverlet,
And pale enchantment held her sleepy-eyed.
Never on such a night have lovers met,
Since Merlin paid his Demon all the monstrous debt.

"It shall be as thou wishest," said the Dame:
"All cates and dainties shall be storèd there
Quickly on this feast-night: by the tambour frame
Her own lute thou wilt see: no time to spare,
For I am slow and feeble, and scarce dare
On such a catering trust my dizzy head.
Wait here, my child, with patience; kneel in prayer
The while: Ah! thou must needs the lady wed,
Or may I never leave my grave among the dead."

So saying, she hobbled off with busy fear.
The lover's endless minutes slowly passed;
The dame returned and whispered in his ear
To follow her; with agèd eyes aghast
From fright of dim espial. Safe at last,
Through many a dusky gallery, they gain
The maiden's chamber, silken, hushed, and chaste;
Where Porphyro took covert, pleased amain.
His poor guide hurried back with agues in her brain.

Her faltering hand upon the balustrade,
Old Angela was feeling for the stair,
When Madeline, St. Agnes' charmèd maid,
Rose, like a missioned spirit, unaware:
With silver taper's light, and pious care,

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She turned, and down the agèd gossip led
 To a safe level matting. Now prepare,
 Young Porphyro, for gazing on that bed;
 She comes, she comes again, like ring-dove frayed and fled.

Out went the taper as she hurried in;
 Its little smoke, in pallid moonshine, died:
 She closed the door, she panted, all akin
 To spirits of the air, and visions wide:
 No uttered syllable, or, woe betide!
 But to her heart, her heart was voluble,
 Paining with eloquence her balmy side;
 As though a tongueless nightingale should swell
 Her throat in vain, and die, heart-stifled, in her dell.

A casement high and triple-arched there was,
 All garlanded with carven imageries
 Of fruits, and flowers, and bunches of knot-grass,
 And diamonded with panes of quaint device,
 Innumerable of stains and splendid dyes,
 As are the tiger-moth's deep-damasked wings;
 And in the midst, 'mong thousand heraldries,
 And twilight saints, and dim emblazonings,
 A shielded scutcheon blushed with blood of queens and
 kings.

Full on this casement shone the wintry moon,
 And threw warm gules on Madeline's fair breast,
 As down she knelt for Heaven's grace and boon;
 Rose-bloom fell on her hands, together pressed,
 And on her silver cross soft amethyst,
 And on her hair a glory, like a saint:
 She seemed a splendid angel, newly dressed,
 Save wings, for heaven:—Porphyro grew faint:
 She knelt, so pure a thing, so free from mortal taint.

Anon his heart revives: her vespers done,
 Of all its wreathèd pearls her hair she frees;
 Unclasps her warmèd jewels one by one;
 Loosens her fragrant bodice; by degrees
 Her rich attire creeps rustling to her knees:

Half-hidden, like a mermaid in seaweed,
Pensive awhile she dreams awake, and sees,
In fancy, fair St. Agnes in her bed,
But dares not look behind, or all the charm is fled.

Soon, trembling in her soft and chilly nest,
In sort of wakeful swoon, perplexed she lay,
Until the popped warmth of sleep oppressed
Her soothèd limbs, and soul fatigued away;
Flown, like a thought, until the morrow-day;
Blissfully havened both from joy and pain;
Clasped like a missal where swart Paynims pray;
Blinded alike from sunshine and from rain,
As though a rose should shut, and be a bud again.

Stolen to this paradise, and so entranced,
Porphyro gazed upon her empty dress,
And listened to her breathing, if it chanced
To wake into a slumberous tenderness;
Which when he heard, that minute did he bless
And breathed himself: then from the closet crept
Noiseless as fear in a wide wilderness,
And over the hushed carpet, silent, stopt,
And 'tween the curtains peeped, where, lo—how fast she
slept.

Then by the bed-side, where the faded moon
Made a dim, silver twilight, soft he set
A table, and, half anguished, threw thereon
A cloth of woven crimson, gold, and jet:—
O for some drowsy Morphean amulet!
The boisterous, midnight, festive clarion,
The kettle-drum, and far-heard clarionet,
Affray his ears, though but in dying tone:—
The hall-door shuts again, and all the noise is gone.

And still she slept an azure-lidded sleep,
In blanchèd linen, smooth and lavendered,
While he forth from the closet brought a heap
Of candied apple, quince, and plum, and gourd;
With jellies soother than the creamy curd,

And lucent syrops, tinct with cinnamon;
 Manna and dates, in argosy transferred
 From Fez; and spicèd dainties, every one,
 From silken Samarcand to cedared Lebanon.

These delicates he heaped with glowing hand
 On golden dishes and in baskets bright
 Of wreathèd silver: sumptuous they stand
 In the retirèd quiet of the night,
 Filling the chilly room with perfume light—
 “And now, my love, my seraph fair, awake!
 Thou art my heaven, and I thine eremite:
 Open thine eyes, for meek St. Agnes’ sake,
 Or I shall drowse beside thee, so my soul doth ache.”

Thus whispering, his warm, unnervèd arm
 Sank in her pillow. Shaded was her dream
 By the dusk curtains:—’twas a midnight charm
 Impossible to melt as icèd stream:
 The lustrous salvers in the moonlight gleam;
 Broad golden fringe upon the carpet lies:
 It seemed he never, never could redeem
 From such a steadfast spell his lady’s eyes;
 So mused awhile, entoièd in woofèd phantasies.

Awakening up, he took her hollow lute,—
 Tumultuous,—and, in chords that tenderest be,
 He played an ancient ditty, long since mute,
 In Provence called, “La belle dame sans merci”:
 Close to her ear touching the melody;—
 Wherewith disturbed, she uttered a soft moan:
 He ceased—she panted quick—and suddenly
 Her blue affrayèd eyes wide open shone:
 Upon his knees he sank, pale as smooth-sculptured stone.

Her eyes were open, but she still beheld,
 Now wide awake, the vision of her sleep:
 There was a painful change, that nigh expelled
 The blisses of her dream so pure and deep:
 At which fair Madeline began to weep,

And moan forth witless words with many a sigh,
While still her gaze on Porphyro would keep;
Who knelt, with joinèd hands and piteous eye,
Fearing to move or speak, she looked so dreamingly.

"Ah, Porphyro!" said she, "but even now
Thy voice was at sweet tremble in mine ear,
Made tuneable with every sweetest vow;
And those sad eyes were spiritual and clear;
How changed thou art! how pallid, chill, and drear!
Give me that voice again, my Porphyro,
Those looks immortal, those complainings dear!
Oh leave me not in this eternal woe,
For if thou diest, my Love, I know not where to go."

Beyond a mortal man impassioned far
At these voluptuous accents, he arose,
Ethereal, flushed, and like a throbbing star
Seen 'mid the sapphire heaven's deep repose;
Into her dream he melted, as the rose
Blendeth its odor with the violet,—
Solution sweet: meantime the frost-wind blows
Like Love's alarum, pattering the sharp sleet
Against the window-panes; St. Agnes' moon hath set.

'Tis dark, quick pattereth the flaw-blown sleet:
"This is no dream, my bride, my Madeline!"
'Tis dark: the icèd gusts still rave and beat:
"No dream, alas! alas! and woe is mine!
Porphyro will leave me here to fade and pine.—
Cruel! what traitor could thee hither bring?
I curse not, for my heart is lost in thine,
Though thou forsakest a deceivèd thing;—
A dove forlorn and lost with sick unpruned wing."

"My Madeline! sweet dreamer! lovely bride!
Say, may I be for aye thy vassal blest?
Thy beauty's shield, heart-shaped and vermeil-dyed?
Ah, silver shrine, here will I take my rest
After so many hours of toil and quest,

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A famished pilgrim,—saved by miracle.
 Though I have found, I will not rob thy nest
 Saving of thy sweet self; if thou thinkest well
 To trust, fair Madeline, to no rude infidel.

“Hark! ’tis an elfin-storm from faery land,
 Of haggard seeming, but a boon indeed:
 Arise—arise! the morning is at hand;—
 The bloated wassailers will never heed:—
 Let us away, my love, with happy speed;
 There are no ears to hear, or eyes to see,—
 Drowned all in Rhenish and the sleepy mead:
 Awake! arise! my love, and fearless be,
 For o’er the southern moors I have a home for thee.”

She hurried at his words, beset with fears,
 For there were sleeping dragons all around,
 At glaring watch, perhaps, with ready spears.—
 Down the wide stairs a darkling way they found.—
 In all the house was heard no human sound.
 A chain-drooped lamp was flickering by each door;
 The arras, rich with horsemen, hawk, and hound,
 Fluttered in the besieging wind’s uproar;
 And the long carpets rose along the gusty floor.

They glide, like phantoms, into the wide hall;
 Like phantoms, to the iron porch, they glide;
 Where lay the Porter, in uneasy sprawl,
 With a huge empty flagon by his side:
 The wakeful bloodhound rose, and shook his hide,
 But his sagacious eye an inmate owns:
 By one, and one, the bolts full easy slide:—
 The chains lie silent on the footworn stones;—
 The key turns, and the door upon its hinges groans.

And they are gone: ay, ages long ago
 These lovers fled away into the storm.
 That night the Baron dreamt of many a woe,
 And all his warrior-guests, with shade and form
 Of witch, and demon, and large coffin-worm,

Were long be-nightmared. Angela the old
 Died palsy-twitched, with meager face deform;
 The Beadsman, after thousand aves told,
 For aye unsought-for slept amongst his ashes cold.

John Keats [1795-1821]

LOCKSLEY HALL

COMRADES, leave me here a little, while as yet 'tis early
 morn;
 Leave me here, and when you want me, sound upon the bugle
 horn.

'Tis the place, and all around it, as of old, the curlews call,
 Dreary gleams about the moorland, flying over Locksley
 Hall:

Locksley Hall, that in the distance overlooks the sandy
 tracts,
 And the hollow ocean-ridges roaring into cataracts.

Many a night from yonder ivied casement, ere I went to rest,
 Did I look on great Orion sloping slowly to the west.

Many a night I saw the Pleiads, rising through the mellow
 shade,
 Glitter like a swarm of fireflies tangled in a silver braid.

Here about the beach I wandered, nourishing a youth sub-
 lime
 With the fairy tales of science, and the long result of time;

When the centuries behind me like a fruitful land reposed;
 When I clung to all the present for the promise that it closed;

When I dipped into the future far as human eye could see,
 Saw the vision of the world, and all the wonder that would be.

In the spring a fuller crimson comes upon the robin's breast;
 In the spring the wanton lapwing gets himself another crest;

3098 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

In the spring a livelier iris changes on the burnished dove;
In the spring a young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts
of love.

Then her cheek was pale and thinner than should be for one
so young,
And her eyes on all my motions with a mute observance
hung.

And I said, "My cousin Amy, speak, and speak the truth
to me;
Trust me, cousin, all the current of my being sets to thee."

On her pallid cheek and forehead came a color and a light,
As I have seen the rosy red flushing in the northern night.

And she turned,—her bosom shaken with a sudden storm
of sighs;
All the spirit deeply dawning in the dark of hazel eyes,—


Saying, "I have hid my feelings, fearing they should do me
wrong;"
Saying, "Dost thou love me, cousin?" weeping, "I have
loved thee long."

Love took up the glass of Time, and turned it in his glowing
hands;
Every moment, lightly shaken, ran itself in golden sands.

Love took up the harp of Life, and smote on all the chords
with might;
Smote the chord of Self, that, trembling, passed in music
out of sight.

Many a morning on the moorland did we hear the copses
ring,
And her whisper thronged my pulses with the fulness of the
spring.

Many an evening by the waters did we watch the stately
ships,
And our spirits rushed together at the touching of the lips.



O my cousin, shallow-hearted! O my Amy, mine no more!
O the dreary, dreary moorland! O the barren, barren shore!

Falser than all fancy fathoms, falser than all songs have
sung,
Puppet to a father's threat, and servile to a shrewish tongue!

Is it well to wish thee happy?—having known me; to decline
On a range of lower feelings and a narrower heart than mine!

Yet it shall be: thou shalt lower to his level day by day,
What is fine within thee growing coarse to sympathize with
clay.

As the husband is, the wife is; thou art mated with a clown,
And the grossness of his nature will have weight to drag thee
down.

He will hold thee, when his passion shall have spent its novel
force,
Something better than his dog, a little dearer than his horse.

What is this? his eyes are heavy,—think not they are glazed
with wine.
Go to him; it is thy duty,—kiss him, take his hand in thine.

It may be my lord is weary, that his brain is overwrought,—
Soothe him with thy finer fancies, touch him with thy
lighter thought.

He will answer to the purpose, easy things to understand,—
Better thou wert dead before me, though I slew thee with
my hand.

Better thou and I were lying, hidden from the heart's dis-
grace,
Rolled in one another's arms, and silent in a last embrace.

Cursed be the social wants that sin against the strength of
youth!
Cursed be the social lies that warp us from the living truth!

3100 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

Cursed be the sickly forms that err from honest Nature's
rule!

Cursed be the gold that gilds the straitened forehead of the
fool!

Well—'tis well that I should bluster!—Hadst thou less
unworthy proved,

Would to God—for I have loved thee more than ever wife
was loved.

Am I mad, that I should cherish that which bears but bitter
fruit?

I will pluck it from my bosom, though my heart be at the
root.

Never! though my mortal summers to such length of years
should come

As the many-wintered crow that leads the clanging rookery
home.

Where is comfort? in division of the records of the mind?

Can I part her from herself, and love her, as I knew her,
kind?

I remember one that perished; sweetly did she speak and
move;

Such a one do I remember, whom to look at was to love.

Can I think of her as dead, and love her for the love she bore?

No,—she never loved me truly; love is love for evermore.

Comfort? comfort scorned of devils! this is truth the poet
sings,

That a sorrow's crown of sorrow is remembering happier
things.

Drug thy memories, lest thou learn it, lest thy heart be put
to proof,

In the dead, unhappy night, and when the rain is on the roof.

Like a dog, he hunts in dreams; and thou art staring at the
wall,
Where the dying night-lamp flickers, and the shadows rise
and fall.

Then a hand shall pass before thee, pointing to his drunken
sleep,
To thy widowed marriage-pillows, to the tears that thou
wilt weep.

Thou shalt hear the "Never, never," whispered by the
phantom years,
And a song from out the distance in the ringing of thine ears.

And an eye shall vex thee, looking ancient kindness on thy
pain.
Turn thee, turn thee on thy pillow; get thee to thy rest
again.

Nay, but Nature brings thee solace; for a tender voice will
cry;
'Tis a purer life than thine, a lip to drain thy trouble dry.

Baby lips will laugh me down; my latest rival brings thee
rest,—
Baby fingers, waxen touches, press me from the mother's
breast.

O, the child too clothes the father with a dearness not his due.
Half is thine and half is his: it will be worthy of the two.

O, I see thee old and formal, fitted to thy petty part,
With a little hoard of maxims preaching down a daughter's
heart.

"They were dangerous guides, the feelings—she herself
was not exempt—
Truly, she herself had suffered"—Perish in thy self-
contempt!

3102 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

Overlive it—lower yet—be happy! wherefore should I care?
I myself must mix with action, lest I wither by despair.

What is that which I should turn to, lighting upon days like
these?

Every door is barred with gold, and opens but to golden keys.

Every gate is thronged with suitors, all the markets over-
flow.

I have but an angry fancy: what is that which I should do?

I had been content to perish, falling on the foeman's ground,
When the ranks are rolled in vapor, and the winds are laid
with sound.

But the jingling of the guinea helps the hurt that Honor
feels,

And the nations do but murmur, snarling at each other's
heels.

Can I but relive in sadness? I will turn that earlier page.
Hide me from my deep emotion, O thou wondrous Mother-
Age!

Make me feel the wild pulsation that I felt before the strife,
When I heard my days before me, and the tumult of my life;

Yearning for the large excitement that the coming years
would yield,

Eager-hearted as a boy when first he leaves his father's field,

And at night along the dusky highway near and nearer
drawn,

Sees in heaven the light of London flaring like a dreary
dawn;

And his spirit leaps within him to be gone before him then,
Underneath the light he looks at, in among the throngs of
men;

Men, my brothers, men the workers, ever reaping something
new:

That which they have done but earnest of the things that
they shall do.

For I dipped into the future, far as human eye could see,
Saw the Vision of the world, and all the wonder that would
be;

Saw the heavens fill with commerce, argosies of magic sails,
Pilots of the purple twilight, dropping down with costly
bales;

Heard the heavens fill with shouting, and there rained a
ghastly dew
From the nations' airy navies grappling in the central blue;

Far along the world-wide whisper of the south-wind rushing
warm,
With the standards of the peoples plunging through the
thunder-storm;

Till the war-drum throbbed no longer, and the battle-flags
were furled
In the Parliament of man, the Federation of the world.

There the common sense of most shall hold a fretful realm
in awe,
And the kindly earth shall slumber, lapped in universal law.

So I triumphed ere my passion sweeping through me left me
dry,
Left me with the palsied heart, and left me with the
jaundiced eye;

Eye, to which all order festers, all things here are out of
joint.
Science moves, but slowly, slowly, creeping on from point
to point:

3104 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

Slowly comes a hungry people, as a lion, creeping nigher,
Glares at one that nods and winks behind a slowly-dying fire.

Yet I doubt not through the ages one increasing purpose
runs,
And the thoughts of men are widened with the process of
the suns.

What is that to him that reaps not harvest of his youthful
joys,
Though the deep heart of existence beat forever like a boy's?

Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers; and I linger on the
shore,
And the individual withers, and the world is more and more.

Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers, and he bears a laden
breast,
Full of sad experience, moving toward the stillness of his
rest.

Hark! my merry comrades call me, sounding on the bugle-
horn,—
They to whom my foolish passion were a target for their
scorn.

Shall it not be scorn to me to harp on such a moldered
string?
I am shamed through all my nature to have loved so slight
a thing.

Weakness to be wroth with weakness! woman's pleasure,
woman's pain—
Nature made them blinder motions bounded in a shallower
brain.

Woman is the lesser man, and all thy passions, matched with
mine,
Are as moonlight unto sunlight, and as water unto wine—

Here at least, where nature sickens, nothing. Ah, for some
retreat

Deep in yonder shining Orient, where my life began to beat!

Where in wild Mahratta-battle fell my father, evil-starred;
I was left a trampled orphan, and a selfish uncle's ward.

Or to burst all links of habit,—there to wander far away,
On from island unto island at the gateways of the day,—

Larger constellations burning, mellow moons and happy
skies,

Breadths of tropic shade and palms in cluster, knots of
Paradise.

Never comes the trader, never floats an European flag,—
Slides the bird o'er lustrous woodland, swings the trailer
from the crag,—

Droops the heavy-blossomed bower, hangs the heavy-
fruited tree,—

Summer isles of Eden lying in dark-purple spheres of sea.

There, methinks, would be enjoyment more than in this
march of mind—

In the steamship, in the railway, in the thoughts that shake
mankind.

There the passions, cramped no longer, shall have scope and
breathing-space;

I will take some savage woman, she shall rear my dusky race.

Iron-jointed, supple-sinewed, they shall dive, and they shall
run,

Catch the wild goat by the hair, and hurl their lances in the
sun,

Whistle back the parrot's call, and leap the rainbows of the
brooks,

Not with blinded eyesight poring over miserable books—

Fool, again the dream, the fancy! but I *know* my words are
wild,

But I count the gray barbarian lower than the Christian
child.

3106 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

I, to herd with narrow foreheads, vacant of our glorious
gains,
Like a beast with lower pleasures, like a beast with lower
pains!

Mated with a squalid savage,—what to me were sun or
clime?

I, the heir of all the ages, in the foremost files of time,—

I, that rather held it better men should perish one by one,
Than that earth should stand at gaze like Joshua's moon
in Ajalon!

Not in vain the distance beacons. Forward, forward let
us range;

Let the great world spin for ever down the ringing grooves of
change.

Through the shadow of the globe we sweep into the younger
day;

Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay.

Mother-Age,—for mine I knew not,—help me as when life
began,—

Rift the hills, and roll the waters, flash the lightnings, weigh
the sun.

O, I see the crescent promise of my spirit hath not set;
Ancient founts of inspiration well through all my fancy yet.

Howsoever these things be, a long farewell to Locksley Hall!
Now for me the woods may wither, now for me the roof-tree
fall.

Comes a vapor from the margin, blackening over heath and
holt,

Cramming all the blast before it, in its breast a thunderbolt.

Let it fall on Locksley Hall, with rain or hail, or fire or
snow;

For the mighty wind arises, roaring seaward, and I go.

Alfred Tennyson [1809-1892]

THE SCHOLAR-GIPSY

Go, for they call you, Shepherd, from the hill;
Go, Shepherd, and untie the wattled cotes:
No longer leave thy wistful flock unfed,
Nor let thy bawling fellows rack their throats,
Nor the cropped grasses shoot another head.
But when the fields are still,
And the tired men and dogs all gone to rest,
And only the white sheep are sometimes seen
Cross and recross the strips of moon-blanced green;
Come, Shepherd, and again begin the quest.

Here, where the reaper was at work of late,
In this high field's dark corner, where he leaves
His coat, his basket, and his earthen cruise,
And in the sun all morning binds the sheaves,
Then here, at noon, comes back his stores to use;
Here will I sit and wait,
While to my ear from uplands far away
The bleating of the folded flocks is borne,
With distant cries of reapers in the corn—
All the live murmur of a summer's day.

Screened is this nook o'er the high, half-reaped field,
And here till sundown, Shepherd, will I be.
Through the thick corn the scarlet poppies peep,
And round green roots and yellowing stalks I see
Pale blue convolvulus in tendrils creep:
And air-swept lindens yield
Their scent, and rustle down their perfumed showers
Of bloom on the bent grass where I am laid,
And bower me from the August sun with shade;
And the eye travels down to Oxford's towers:

And near me on the grass lies Glanvil's book—
Come, let me read the oft-read tale again:
The story of that Oxford scholar poor,
Of pregnant parts and quick inventive brain,

3108 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

Who, tired of knocking at Preferment's door,
 One summer morn forsook
 His friends, and went to learn the Gipsy lore,
 And roamed the world with that wild brotherhood,
 And came, as most men deemed, to little good,
 But came to Oxford and his friends no more.

But once, years after, in the country lanes,
 Two scholars, whom at college erst he knew,
 Met him, and of his way of life inquired.
 Whereat he answered that the Gipsy crew,
 His mates, had arts to rule as they desired
 The workings of men's brains;
 And they can bind them to what thoughts they will:
 "And I," he said, "the secret of their art, .
 When fully learned, will to the world impart:
 But it needs Heaven-sent moments for this skill!"

This said, he left them, and returned no more,
 But rumors hung about the country-side,
 That the lost Scholar long was seen to stray,
 Seen by rare glimpses, pensive and tongue-tied,
 In hat of antique shape, and cloak of gray,
 The same the Gipsies wore.
 Shepherds had met him on the Hurst in spring;
 At some lone alehouse in the Berkshire moors,
 On the warm ingle-bench, the smock-frocked boors
 Had found him seated at their entering,

But, 'mid their drink and clatter, he would fly:
 And I myself seem half to know thy looks,
 And put the shepherds, Wanderer, on thy trace;
 And boys who in lone wheatfields scare the rooks
 I ask if thou hast passed their quiet place;
 Or in my boat I lie
 Moored to the cool bank in the summer heats,
 'Mid wide grass meadows which the sunshine fills,
 And watch the warm green-muffled Cumnor hills,
 And wonder if thou haunt'st their shy retreats.

For most, I know, thou lov'st retirèd ground.

 Thee, at the ferry, Oxford riders blithe,

 Returning home on summer nights, have met

Crossing the stripling Thames at Bablock-hithe,

 Trailing in the cool stream thy fingers wet,

 As the slow punt swings round:

And leaning backwards in a pensive dream,

 And fostering in thy lap a heap of flowers

 Plucked in shy fields and distant Wychwood bowers,

And thine eyes resting on the moonlit stream:

And then they land, and thou art seen no more.

 Maidens who from the distant hamlets come

 To dance around the Fyfield elm in May,

Oft through the darkening fields have seen thee roam,

 Or cross a stile into the public way.

 Oft thou hast given them store

Of flowers—the frail-leaved, white anemone—

 Dark bluebells drenched with dews of summer eves,

 And purple orchises with spotted leaves—

But none has words she can report of thee.

And, above Godstow Bridge, when hay-time's here

 In June, and many a scythe in sunshine flames,

 Men who through those wide fields of breezy grass

Where black-winged swallows haunt the glittering
 Thames,

 To bathe in the abandoned lasher pass,

 Have often passed thee near

Sitting upon the river bank o'ergrown:

 Marked thine outlandish garb, thy figure spare,

 Thy dark vague eyes, and soft abstracted air;

But, when they came from bathing, thou wert gone.

At some lone homestead in the Cumnor hills,

 Where at her open door the housewife darns,

 Thou hast been seen, or hanging on a gate

To watch the threshers in the mossy barns.

 Children, who early range these slopes and late

 For cresses from the rills,

3110 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

Have known thee watching, all an April day,
The springing pastures and the feeding kine;
And marked thee, when the stars come out and
shine,
Through the long dewy grass move slow away.

In autumn, on the skirts of Bagley Wood,
Where most the Gipsies by the turf-edged way
Pitch their smoked tents, and every bush you see
With scarlet patches tagged and shreds of gray,
Above the forest-ground called Thessaly—
The blackbird picking food
Sees thee, nor stops his meal, nor fears at all;
So often has he known thee past him stray
Rapt, twirling in thy hand a withered spray,
And waiting for the spark from Heaven to fall.

And once, in winter, on the causeway chill
Where home through flooded fields foot-travelers go,
Have I not passed thee on the wooden bridge
Wrapped in thy cloak and battling with the snow,
Thy face towards Hinksey and its wintry ridge?
And thou hast climbed the hill
And gained the white brow of the Cumnor range;
Turned once to watch, while thick the snowflakes
fall,
The line of festal light in Christ Church hall—
Then sought thy straw in some sequestered grange.

But what—I dream! Two hundred years are flown
Since first thy story ran through Oxford halls,
And the grave Glanvil did the tale inscribe
That thou wert wandered from the studious walls
To learn strange arts, and join a Gipsy tribe:
And thou from earth art gone
Long since, and in some quiet churchyard laid;
Some country nook, where o'er thy unknown grave
Tall grasses and white flowering nettles wave—
Under a dark red-fruited yew-tree's shade.

—No, no, thou hast not felt the lapse of hours.
For what wears out the life of mortal men?
’Tis that from change to change their being rolls
’Tis that repeated shocks, again, again,
Exhaust the energy of strongest souls,
And numb the elastic powers.
Till having used our nerves with bliss and teen,
And tired upon a thousand schemes our wit,
To the just-pausing Genius we remit
Our worn-out life, and are—what we have been.

Thou hast not lived, why shouldst thou perish, so?
Thou hadst *one* aim, *one* business, *one* desire:
Else wert thou long since numbered with the dead—
Else hadst thou spent, like other men, thy fire.
The generations of thy peers are fled,
And we ourselves shall go;
But thou possessest an immortal lot,
And we imagine thee exempt from age
And living as thou liv’st on Glanvil’s page,
Because thou hadst—what we, alas, have not!

For early didst thou leave the world, with powers
Fresh, undiverted to the world without,
Firm to their mark, not spent on other things;
Free from the sick fatigue, the languid doubt,
Which much to have tried, in much been baffled, brings.
O Life unlike to ours!
Who fluctuate idly without term or scope,
Of whom each strives, nor knows for what he strives,
And each half lives a hundred different lives;
Who wait like thee, but not, like thee, in hope.

Thou waitest for the spark from Heaven: and we,
Vague half-believers of our casual creeds,
Who never deeply felt, nor clearly willed,
Whose insight never has borne fruit in deeds,
Whose weak resolves never have been fulfilled;
For whom each year we see

3112 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

Breeds new beginnings, disappointments new;
 Who hesitate and falter life away,
 And lose to-morrow the ground won to-day—
 Ah, do not we, Wanderer, await it too?

Yes, we await it, but it still delays,
 And then we suffer; and amongst us One,
 Who most has suffered, takes dejectedly
 His seat upon the intellectual throne;
 And all his store of sad experience he
 Lays bare of wretched days;
 Tells us his misery's birth and growth and signs,
 And how the dying spark of hope was fed,
 And how the breast was soothed, and how the
 head,
 And all his hourly varied anodynes.

This for our wisest: and we others pine,
 And wish the long unhappy dream would end,
 And waive all claim to bliss, and try to bear,
 With close-lipped Patience for our only friend,
 Sad Patience, too near neighbor to Despair:
 But none has hope like thine.
 Thou through the fields and through the woods dost
 stray,
 Roaming the country-side, a truant boy,
 Nursing thy project in unclouded joy,
 And every doubt long blown by time away.

O born in days when wits were fresh and clear,
 And life ran gaily as the sparkling Thames;
 Before this strange disease of modern life,
 With its sick hurry, its divided aims,
 Its heads o'ertaxed, its palsied hearts, was rife—
 Fly hence, our contact fear!
 Still fly, plunge deeper in the bowering wood!
 Averse, as Dido did with gesture stern
 From her false friend's approach in Hades turn,
 Wave us away, and keep thy solitude.

Still nursing the unconquerable hope,
Still clutching the inviolable shade,
With a free onward impulse brushing through,
By night, the silvered branches of the glade—
Far on the forest-skirts, where none pursue,
On some mild pastoral slope
Emerge, and resting on the moonlit pales,
Freshen thy flowers, as in former years,
With dew, or listen with enchanted ears,
From the dark dingles, to the nightingales.

But fly our paths, our feverish contact fly!
For strong the infection of our mental strife,
Which, though it gives no bliss, yet spoils for rest;
And we should win thee from thy own fair life,
Like us distracted, and like us unblest.
Soon, soon thy cheer would die,
Thy hopes grow timorous, and unfix'd thy powers,
And thy clear aims be cross and shifting made:
And then thy glad perennial youth would fade,
Fade, and grow old at last, and die like ours.

Then fly our greetings, fly our speech and smiles!
—As some grave Tyrian trader, from the sea,
Descried at sunrise an emerging prow
Lifting the cool-haired creepers stealthily,
The fringes of a southward-facing brow
Among the Ægean isles;
And saw the merry Grecian coaster come,
Freighted with amber grapes, and Chian wine,
Green bursting figs, and tunnies steeped in brine;
And knew the intruders on his ancient home,

The young light-hearted Masters of the waves;
And snatched his rudder, and shook out more sail,
And day and night held on indignantly
O'er the blue Midland waters with the gale,
Betwixt the Syrtes and soft Sicily,
To where the Atlantic raves

3114 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

Outside the Western Straits, and unbent sails
There, where down cloudy cliffs, through sheets of foam,
Shy traffickers, the dark Iberians come;
And on the beach undid his corded bales.

Matthew Arnold [1822-1888]

JUGGLING JERRY

PITCH here the tent, while the old horse grazes:
By the old hedge-side we'll halt a stage.
It's nigh my last above the daisies:
My next leaf'll be man's blank page.
Yes, my old girl! and it's no use crying:
Juggler, constable, king, must bow.
One that outjuggles all's been spying
Long to have me, and he has me now.

We've traveled times to this old common
Often we've hung our pots in the gorse.
We've had a stirring life, old woman!
You, and I, and the old gray horse.
Races, and fairs, and royal occasions,
Found us coming to their call:
Now they'll miss us at our stations:
There's a Juggler outjuggles all!

Up goes the lark, as if all were jolly!
Over the duck-pond the willow shakes.
Easy to think that grieving's folly,
When the hand's firm as driven stakes!
Ay, when we're strong, and braced, and manful,
Life's a sweet fiddle: but we're a batch
Born to become the Great Juggler's han'ful:
Balls he shies up, and is safe to catch.

Here's where the lads of the village cricket:
I was a lad not wide from here:
Couldn't I whip off the bale from the wicket?
Like an old world those days appear!

Donkey, sheep, geese, and thatched ale-house—I know them!

They are old friends of my halts, and seem,
Somehow, as if kind thanks I owe them:
Juggling don't hinder the heart's esteem.

Juggling's no sin, for we must have victual:
Nature allows us to bait for the fool.
Holding one's own makes us juggle no little;
But, to increase it, hard juggling's the rule.
You that are sneering at my profession,
Haven't you juggled a vast amount?
There's the Prime Minister, in one Session,
Juggles more games than my sins'll count.

I've murdered insects with mock thunder:
Conscience, for that, in men don't quail.
I've made bread from the bump of wonder:
That's my business, and there's my tale.
Fashion and rank all praised the professor:
Ay! and I've had my smile from the Queen:
Bravo, Jerry! she meant: God bless her!
Ain't this a sermon on that scene?

I've studied men from my topsy-turvy
Close, and, I reckon, rather true.
Some are fine fellows: some, right scurvy:
Most, a dash between the two.
But it's a woman, old girl, that makes me
Think more kindly of the race:
And it's a woman, old girl, that shakes me
When the Great Juggler I must face.

We two were married, due and legal:
Honest we've lived since we've been one.
Lord! I could then jump like an eagle:
You danced bright as a bit o' the sun.
Birds in a May-bush we were! right merry!
All night we kissed, we juggled all day.
Joy was the heart of Juggling Jerry!
Now from his old girl he's juggled away.

3116 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

It's past parsons to console us:
 No, nor no doctor fetch for me:
 I can die without my bolus;
 Two of a trade, lass, never agree!
 Parson and Doctor!—don't they love rarely,
 Fighting the devil in other men's fields!
 Stand up yourself and match him fairly:
 Then see how the rascal yields!

I, lass, have lived no gipsy, flaunting
 Finery while his poor helpmate grubs:
 Coin I've stored, and you won't be wanting:
 You shan't beg from the troughs and tubs.
 Nobly you've stuck to me, though in his kitchen
 Many a Marquis would hail you Cook!
 Palaces you could have ruled and grown rich in,
 But your old Jerry you never forsook.

Hand up the chirper! ripe ale winks in it;
 Let's have comfort and be at peace.
 Once a stout draught made me light as a linnet.
 Cheer up! the Lord must have his lease.
 May be—for none see in that black hollow—
 It's just a place where we're held in pawn,
 And, when the Great Juggler makes as to swallow,
 It's just the sword-trick—I ain't quite gone!

Yonder came smells of the gorse, so nutty,
 Gold-like and warm: it's the prime of May.
 Better than mortar, brick and putty,
 Is God's house on a blowing day.
 Lean me more up the mound; now I feel it:
 All the old heath-smells! Ain't it strange?
 There's the world laughing, as if to conceal it,
 But He's by us, juggling the change.

I mind it well, by the sea-beach lying,
 Once—it's long gone—when two gulls we beheld,
 Which, as the moon got up, were flying
 Down a big wave that sparked and swelled.

Crack, went a gun: one fell; the second
Wheeled round him twice, and was off for new luck:
There in the dark her white wing beckoned:—
Drop me a kiss—I'm the bird dead-struck!

George Meredith [1828-1909]

A COURT LADY

HER hair was tawny with gold, her eyes with purple were
dark,
Her cheeks' pale opal burnt with a red and restless spark.

Never was lady of Milan nobler in name and in race;
Never was lady of Italy fairer to see in the face.

Never was lady on earth more true as woman and wife,
Larger in judgment and instinct, prouder in manners and
life.

She stood in the early morning, and said to her maidens,
"Bring
That silken robe made ready to wear at the Court of the
King.

"Bring me the clasps of diamond, lucid, clear of the mote,
Clasp me the large at the waist, and clasp me the small at
the throat.

"Diamonds to fasten the hair, and diamonds to fasten the
sleeves,
Laces to drop from their rays, like a powder of snow from
the eaves."

Gorgeous she entered the sunlight which gathered her up in
a flame,
While, straight in her open carriage, she to the hospital came.

In she went at the door, and gazing from end to end,
"Many and low are the pallets, but each is the place of a
friend."

3118 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

Up she passed through the wards, and stood at a young man's
bed:

Bloody the band on his brow, and livid the droop of his head.

"Art thou a Lombard, my brother? Happy art thou," she
cried,
And smiled like Italy on him: he dreamed in her face and
died.

Pale with his passing soul, she went on still to a second:
He was a grave hard man, whose years by dungeons were
reckoned.

Wounds in his body were sore, wounds in his life were sorer.
"Art thou a Romagnole?" Her eyes drove lightnings be-
fore her.

"Austrian and priest had joined to double and tighten the
cord
Able to bind thee, O strong one,—free by the stroke of a
sword.

"Now be grave for the rest of us, using the life overcast
To ripen our wine of the present, (too new) in glooms of
the past."

Down she stepped to a pallet where lay a face like a girl's,
Young, and pathetic with dying,—a deep black hole in the
curls.

"Art thou from Tuscany, brother? and seest thou, dreaming
in pain,
Thy mother stand in the piazza, searching the list of the
slain?"

Kind as a mother herself, she touched his cheeks with her
hands:

"Blessed is she who has borne thee, although she should
weep as she stands."

On she passed to a Frenchman, his arm carried off by a ball:
Kneeling,—“O more than my brother! how shall I thank
thee for all?”

“Each of the heroes around us has fought for his land and
line,
But *thou* hast fought for a stranger, in hate of a wrong not
thine.

“Happy are all free peoples, too strong to be dispossessed:
But blessed are those among nations, who dare to be strong
for the rest!”

Ever she passed on her way, and came to a couch where
pined
One with a face from Venetia, white with a hope out of mind.

Long she stood and gazed, and twice she tried at the name,
But two great crystal tears were all that faltered and came.

Only a tear for Venice?—she turned as in passion and loss,
And stooped to his forehead and kissed it, as if she were
kissing the cross.

Faint with that strain of heart she moved on then to an-
other,
Stern and strong in his death. “And dost thou suffer, my
brother?”

Holding his hands in hers:—“Out of the Piedmont lion
Cometh the sweetness of freedom! sweetest to live or to die
on.”

Holding his cold rough hands,—“Well, oh, well have ye
done
In noble, noble Piedmont, who would not be noble alone.”

Back he fell while she spoke. She rose to her feet with a
spring,—

“That was a Piedmontese! and this is the Court of the King.”

Elizabeth Barrett Browning [1806-1861]

THE HIGH TIDE ON THE COAST OF
LINCOLNSHIRE

(1571)

THE old mayor climbed the belfry tower,
The ringers ran by two, by three;
"Pull, if ye never pulled before;
Good ringers, pull your best," quoth he.
"Play uppe, play uppe, O Boston bells!
Play all your changes, all your swells,
Play uppe, 'The Brides of Enderby'."

Men say it was a stolen tyde—
The Lord that sent it, He knows all;
But in myne ears doth still abide
The message that the bells let fall:
And there was naught of strange, beside
The flight of mews and peewits pied
By millions crouched on the old sea wall.

I sat and spun within the doore,
My thread brake off, I raised myne eyes;
The level sun, like ruddy ore,
Lay sinking in the barren skies;
And dark against day's golden death
She moved where Lindis wandereth,
My sonne's faire wife, Elizabeth.

"Cusha! Cusha! Cusha!" calling,
Ere the early dews were falling,
Farre away I heard her song,
"Cusha! Cusha!" all along;
Where the reedy Lindis floweth,
Floweth, floweth,
From the meads where melick groweth
Faintly came her milking song—

"Cusha! Cusha! Cusha!" calling,
"For the dews will soone be falling;
Leave your meadow grasses mellow,
Mellow, mellow;

Quit your cowslips, cowslips yellow;
 Come uppe, Whitefoot, come uppe, Lightfoot;
 Quit the stalks of parsley hollow,
 Hollow, hollow;
 Come uppe, Jetty, rise and follow,
 From the clovers lift your head;
 Come uppe, Whitefoot, come uppe, Lightfoot,
 Come uppe, Jetty, rise and follow,
 Jetty, to the milking shed."

If it be long, ay, long ago,
 When I beginne to think howe long,
 Againe I hear the Lindis flow,
 Swift as an arrowe, sharpe and strong;
 And all the aire, it seemeth mee,
 Bin full of floating bells (sayth shee),
 That ring the tune of Enderby.

Alle fresh the level pasture lay,
 And not a shadowe mote be seene,
 Save where full fyve good miles away
 The steeple towered from out the greene;
 And lo! the great bell farre and wide
 Was heard in all the country side
 That Saturday at eventide.

The swanherds where their sedges are
 Moved on in sunset's golden breath,
 The shepherde lads I heard afarre,
 And my sonne's wife, Elizabeth;
 Till floating o'er the grassy sea
 Came downe that kyndly message free,
 The "Brides of Mavis Enderby."

Then some looked uppe into the sky,
 And all along where Lindis flows
 To where the goodly vessels lie,
 And where the lordly steeple shows.
 They sayde, "And why should this thing be?
 What danger lowers by land or sea?
 They ring the tune of Enderby!

"For evil news from Mablethorpe,
 Of pyrate galleys warping down;
 For shippes ashore beyond the scorpe,
 They have not spared to wake the towne:
 But while the west bin red to see,
 And storms be none, and pyrates flee,
 Why ring 'The Brides of Enderby'?"

I looked without, and lo! my sonne
 Came riding downe with might and main:
 He raised a shout as he drew on,
 Till all the welkin rang again,
 "Elizabeth! Elizabeth!"
 (A sweeter woman ne'er drew breath
 Than my sonne's wife, Elizabeth.)

"The olde sea wall (he cried) is downe,
 The rising tide comes on apace,
 And boats adrift in yonder towne
 Go sailing uppe the market-place."
 He shook as one that looks on death:
 "God save you, mother!" straight he saith;
 "Where is my wife, Elizabeth?"

"Good sonne, where Lindis winds her way,
 With her two bairns I marked her long;
 And ere yon bells beganne to play,
 Afar I heard her milking song."
 He looked across the grassy lea,
 To right, to left, "Ho, Enderby!"
 They rang "The Brides of Enderby!"

With that he cried and beat his breast;
 For, lo! along the river's bed
 A mighty eygre reared his crest,
 And uppe the Lindis raging sped.
 It swept with thunderous noises loud;
 Shaped like a curling snow-white cloud,
 Or like a demon in a shroud.

And rearing Lindis backward pressed,
Shook all her trembling bankes amaine;
Then madly at the eygre's breast
Flung uppe her weltering walls again.
Then bankes came downe with ruin and rout—
Then beaten foam flew round about—
Then all the mighty floods were out.

So farre, so fast the eygre drave,
The heart had hardly time to beat
Before a shallow seething wave
Sobbed in the grasses at oure feet:
The feet had hardly time to flee
Before it brake against the knee,
And all the world was in the sea.

Upon the roofe we sate that night,
The noise of bells went sweeping by;
I marked the lofty beacon light
Stream from the church tower, red and high—
A lurid mark and dread to see;
And awsome bells they were to mee,
That in the dark rang "Enderby."

They rang the sailor lads to guide
From roofe to roofe who fearless rowed;
And I—my sonne was at my side,
And yet the ruddy beacon glowed:
And yet he moaned beneath his breath,
"O come in life, or come in death!
O lost! my love, Elizabeth!"

And didst thou visit him no more?
Thou didst, thou didst, my daughter deare;
The waters laid thee at his doore,
Ere yet the early dawn was clear.
Thy pretty bairns in fast embrace,
The lifted sun shone on thy face,
Downe drifted to thy dwelling-place.

3124 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

That flow strewed wrecks about the grass,
 That ebbe swept out the flocks to sea;
 A fatal ebbe and flow, alas!
 To manye more than myne and mee;
 But each will mourn his own (she saith);
 And sweeter woman ne'er drew breath
 Than my sonne's wife, Elizabeth.

I shall never hear her more
 By the reedy Lindis shore,
 "Cusha! Cusha! Cusha!" calling,
 Ere the early dews be falling;
 I shall never hear her song,
 "Cusha! Cusha!" all along
 Where the sunny Lindis floweth,
 Goeth, floweth;
 From the meads where melick groweth,
 When the water winding down,
 Onward floweth to the town.

I shall never see her more
 Where the reeds and rushes quiver,
 Shiver, quiver;
 Stand beside the sobbing river,
 Sobbing, throbbing, in its falling
 To the sandy lonesome shore;
 I shall never hear her calling,
 "Leave your meadow grasses mellow,
 Mellow, mellow;
 Quit your cowslips, cowslips yellow;
 Come uppe, Whitefoot, come uppe, Lightfoot;
 Quit your pipes of parsley hollow,
 Hollow, hollow;
 Come uppe, Lightfoot, rise and follow;
 Lightfoot, Whitefoot,
 From your clovers lift the head;
 Come uppe, Jetty, follow, follow,
 Jetty, to the milking shed."

Jean Ingelow [1820-1897]

THE SKELETON IN ARMOR

"SPEAK! speak! thou fearful guest!
Who, with thy hollow breast
Still in rude armor dressed,
Comest to daunt me!
Wrapped not in Eastern balms,
But with thy fleshless palms
Stretched, as if asking alms,
Why dost thou haunt me?"

Then, from those cavernous eyes
Pale flashes seemed to rise,
As when the Northern skies
Gleam in December;
And, like the water's flow
Under December's snow,
Came a dull voice of woe
From the heart's chamber.

"I was a Viking old!
My deeds, though manifold,
No Skald in song has told,
No Saga taught thee!
Take heed, that in thy verse
Thou dost the tale rehearse,
Else dread a dead man's curse;
For this I sought thee.

"Far in the Northern Land,
By the wild Baltic's strand,
I, with my childish hand,
Tamed the gerfalcon;
And, with my skates fast-bound,
Skimmed the half-frozen Sound,
That the poor whimpering hound
Trembled to walk on.

"Oft to his frozen lair
Tracked I the grisly bear,
While from my path the hare
Fled like a shadow;

Oft through the forest dark
 Followed the were-wolf's bark,
 Until the soaring lark
 Sang from the meadow.

"But when I older grew,
 Joining a corsair's crew,
 O'er the dark sea I flew
 With the marauders.
 Wild was the life we led;
 Many the souls that sped,
 Many the hearts that bled,
 By our stern orders.

"Many a wassail-bout
 Wore the long Winter out;
 Often our midnight shout
 Set the cocks crowing,
 As we the Berserk's tale
 Measured in cups of ale,
 Draining the oaken pail,
 Filled to o'erflowing.

"Once as I told in glee
 Tales of the stormy sea,
 Soft eyes did gaze on me,
 Burning yet tender;
 And as the white stars shine
 On the dark Norway pine,
 On that dark heart of mine
 Fell their soft splendor.

"I wooed the blue-eyed maid,
 Yielding, yet half afraid,
 And in the forest's shade
 Our vows were plighted.
 Under its loosened vest
 Fluttered her little breast,
 Like birds within their nest
 By the hawk frightened.

"Bright in her father's hall
Shields gleamed upon the wall,
Loud sang the minstrels all,
 Chanting his glory;
When of old Hildebrand
I asked his daughter's hand,
Mute did the minstrels stand
 To hear my story.

"While the brown ale he quaffed,
Loud then the champion laughed,
And as the wind-gusts waft
 The sea-foam brightly,
So the loud laugh of scorn,
Out of those lips unshorn,
From the deep drinking-horn
 Blew the foam lightly.

"She was a Prince's child,
I but a Viking wild,
And though she blushed and smiled,
 I was discarded!
Should not the dove so white
Follow the sea-mew's flight,
Why did they leave that night
 Her nest unguarded?

"Scarce had I put to sea,
Bearing the maid with me,
Fairest of all was she
 Among the Norsemen!
When on the white sea-strand,
Waving his armed hand,
Saw we old Hildebrand,
 With twenty horsemen.

"Then launched they to the blast,
Bent like a reed each mast,
Yet we were gaining fast,
 When the wind failed us;

And with a sudden flaw
 Came round the gusty Skaw,
 So that our foe we saw
 Laugh as he hailed us.

“And as to catch the gale
 Round veered the flapping sail,
 ‘Death!’ was the helmsman’s hail,
 ‘Death without quarter!’
 Mid-ships with iron keel
 Struck we her ribs of steel;
 Down her black hulk did reel
 Through the black water!

“As with his wings aslant,
 Sails the fierce cormorant,
 Seeking some rocky haunt,
 With his prey laden,—
 So toward the open main,
 Beating to sea again,
 Through the wild hurricane,
 Bore I the maiden.

“Three weeks we westward bore,
 And when the storm was o’er,
 Cloud-like we saw the shore
 Stretching to leeward;
 There for my lady’s bower
 Built I the lofty tower,
 Which, to this very hour,
 Stands looking seaward.

‘There lived we many years;
 Time dried the maiden’s tears;
 She had forgot her fears,
 She was a mother;
 Death closed her mild blue eyes,
 Under that tower she lies;
 Ne’er shall the sun arise
 On such another!

“Still grew my bosom then,
Still as a stagnant fen!
Hateful to me were men,
 The sunlight hateful!
In the vast forest here,
Clad in my warlike gear,
Fell I upon my spear,
 Oh, death was grateful!

“Thus, seamed with many scars,
Bursting these prison bars,
Up to its native stars
 My soul ascended!
There from the flowing bowl
Deep drinks the warrior’s soul,
Skoal! to the Northland! *skoal!*”
Thus the tale ended.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow [1807-1882]

DANIEL GRAY

If I shall ever win the home in heaven
For whose sweet rest I humbly hope and pray,
In the great company of the forgiven
I shall be sure to find old Daniel Gray.

I knew him well; in truth, few knew him better;
For my young eyes oft read for him the Word,
And saw how meekly from the crystal letter
He drank the life of his beloved Lord.

Old Daniel Gray was not a man who lifted
On ready words his freight of gratitude,
Nor was he called upon among the gifted,
In the prayer-meetings of his neighborhood.

He had a few old-fashioned words and phrases,
Linked in with sacred texts and Sunday rhymes;
And I suppose that in his prayers and graces
I’ve heard them all at least a thousand times.

3130 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

I see him now—his form, his face, his motions,
His homespun habit, and his silver hair,—
And hear the language of his trite devotions,
Rising behind the straight-backed kitchen chair.

I can remember how the sentence sounded—
“Help us, O Lord, to pray and not to faint!”
And how the “conquering-and-to-conquer” rounded
The loftier aspirations of the saint.

He had some notions that did not improve him,
He never kissed his children—so they say;
And finest scenes and fairest flowers would move him
Less than a horseshoe picked up in the way.

He had a hearty hatred of oppression,
And righteous words for sin of every kind;
Alas, that the transgressor and transgression
Were linked so closely in his honest mind!

He could see naught but vanity in beauty,
And naught but weakness in a fond caress,
And pitied men whose views of Christian duty
Allowed indulgence in such foolishness.

Yet there was love and tenderness within him;
And I am told that when his Charley died,
Nor nature's need nor gentle words could win him
From his fond vigils at the sleeper's side.

And when they came to bury little Charley,
They found fresh dewdrops sprinkled in his hair,
And on his breast a rose-bud gathered early,
And guessed, but did not know who placed it there.

Honest and faithful, constant in his calling,
Strictly attendant on the means of grace,
Instant in prayer, and fearful most of falling,
Old Daniel Gray was always in his place.

“Curfew Must Not Ring To-night” 3131

A practical old man, and yet a dreamer,
He thought that in some strange, unlooked-for way
His mighty Friend in Heaven, the great Redeemer,
Would honor him with wealth some golden day.

This dream he carried in a hopeful spirit
Until in death his patient eye grew dim,
And his Redeemer called him to inherit
The heaven of wealth long garnered up for him.

So, if I ever win the home in Heaven
For whose sweet rest I humbly hope and pray,
In the great company of the forgiven
I shall be sure to find old Daniel Gray.

Josiah Gilbert Holland [1819-1881]

“CURFEW MUST NOT RING TO-NIGHT”

SLOWLY England's sun was setting o'er the hilltops far away,
Filling all the land with beauty at the close of one sad day,
And the last rays kissed the forehead of a man and maiden
fair,—

He with footsteps slow and weary, she with sunny floating
hair;

He with bowed head, sad and thoughtful, she with lips all
cold and white,

Struggling to keep back the murmur,—

“Curfew must not ring to-night.”

“Sexton,” Bessie's white lips faltered, pointing to the prison
old,

With its turrets tall and gloomy, with its walls dark, damp,
and cold,

“I've a lover in that prison, doomed this very night to die,

At the ringing of the Curfew, and no earthly help is nigh;

Cromwell will not come till sunset,” and her lips grew
strangely white

As she breathed the husky whisper:—

“Curfew must not ring to-night.”

3132 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

"Bessie," calmly spoke the sexton,—every word pierced
her young heart
Like the piercing of an arrow, like a deadly poisoned dart,—
"Long, long years I've rung the Curfew from that gloomy,
shadowed tower;
Every evening, just at sunset, it has told the twilight hour;
I have done my duty ever, tried to do it just and right,
Now I'm old I will not falter,—
Curfew, it must ring to-night."

Wild her eyes and pale her features, stern and white her
thoughtful brow,
As within her secret bosom Bessie made a solemn vow.
She had listened while the judges read, without a tear or
sigh:
"At the ringing of the Curfew, Basil Underwood must die."
And her breath came fast and faster, and her eyes grew
large and bright;
In an undertone she murmured:—
"Curfew must not ring to-night."

With quick step she bounded forward, sprang within the
old church door,
Left the old man threading slowly paths he'd trod so oft
before;
Not one moment paused the maiden, but with eye and cheek
aglow
Mounted up the gloomy tower, where the bell swung to and
fro:
As she climbed the dusty ladder, on which fell no ray of light,
Up and up,—her white lips saying:—
"Curfew must not ring to-night!"

She has reached the topmost ladder; o'er her hangs the great,
dark bell;
Awful is the gloom beneath her, like the pathway down to
hell.
Lo, the ponderous tongue is swinging,—'tis the hour of
Curfew now,
And the sight has chilled her bosom, stopped her breath,
and paled her brow.

“Curfew Must Not Ring To-night” 3133

Shall she let it ring? No, never! flash her eyes with sudden
light,

As she springs, and grasps it firmly,—

“Curfew shall not ring to-night!”

Out she swung—far out; the city seemed a speck of light
below,

There 'twixt heaven and earth suspended as the bell swung
to and fro,

And the half-deaf sexton ringing (years he had not heard
the bell),

Sadly thought the twilight Curfew rang young Basil's
funeral knell.

Still the maiden clung more firmly, and with trembling lips
so white,

Said to hush her heart's wild throbbing:—

“Curfew shall not ring to-night!”

It was o'er, the bell ceased swaying, and the maiden stepped
once more

Firmly on the dark old ladder where for hundred years before
Human foot had not been planted. The brave deed that she
had done

Should be told long ages after: as the rays of setting sun
Crimson all the sky with beauty, aged sires, with heads of
white,

Tell the eager, listening children,

“Curfew did not ring that night.”

O'er the distant hills came Cromwell; Bessie sees him, and
her brow,

Lately white with fear and anguish, has no anxious traces
now.

At his feet she tells her story, shows her hands all bruised
and torn;

And her face so sweet and pleading, yet with sorrow pale
and worn,

Touched his heart with sudden pity, lit his eyes with misty
light:

“Go! your lover lives,” said Cromwell,

“Curfew shall not ring to-night.”

3134 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

Wide they flung the massive portal; led the prisoner forth to
die,—
All his bright young life before him. 'Neath the darkening
English sky
Bessie comes with flying footsteps, eyes aglow with love-
light sweet;
Kneeling on the turf beside him, lays his pardon at his feet.
In his brave, strong arms he clasped her, kissed the face up-
turned and white,
Whispered, "Darling, you have saved me,—
Curfew will not ring to-night!"

Rose Hartwick Thorpe [1850—

THE OLD SERGEANT

[JANUARY 1, 1863]

*The Carrier cannot sing to-day the ballads
With which he used to go,
Rhyming the glad rounds of the happy New Years
That are now beneath the snow:*

*For the same awful and portentous Shadow
That overcast the earth,
And smote the land last year with desolation,
Still darkens every hearth.*

*And the Carrier hears Beethoven's mighty death-march
Come up from every mart;
And he hears and feels it breathing in his bosom,
And beating in his heart.*

*And to-day, a scarred and weather-beaten veteran,
Again he comes along,
To tell the story of the Old Year's struggles
In another New Year's song.*

*And the song is his, but not so with the story;
For the story, you must know,
Was told in prose to Assistant-Surgeon Austin,
By a soldier of Shiloh:*

*By Robert Burton, who was brought up on the Adams,
With his death-wound in his side;
And who told the story to the Assistant-Surgeon,
On the same night that he died.*

*But the singer feels it will better suit the ballad,
If all should deem it right,
To tell the story as if what it speaks of
Had happened but last night.*

"Come a little nearer, Doctor,—thank you; let me take the cup:

Draw your chair up,—draw it closer; just another little sup!
May be you think I'm better; but I'm pretty well used up,—
Doctor, you've done all you could do, but I'm just a-going
up!

"Feel my pulse, sir, if you want to, but it ain't much use to try"—

"Never say that," said the Surgeon, as he smothered down a sigh;

"It will never do, old comrade, for a soldier to say die!"

"What you say will make no difference, Doctor, when you come to die.

"Doctor, what has been the matter?" "You were very faint, they say;

You must try to get to sleep now." "Doctor, have I been away?"

"Not that anybody knows of!" "Doctor—Doctor, please to stay!

There is something I must tell you, and you won't have long to stay!

"I have got my marching orders, and I'm ready now to go; Doctor, did you say I fainted?—but it couldn't ha' been so, For as sure as I'm a Sergeant, and was wounded at Shiloh, I've this very night been back there, on the old field of Shiloh!

3136 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

"This is all that I remember: the last time the Lighter came,
And the lights had all been lowered, and the noises much the same,
He had not been gone five minutes before something called my name:
'ORDERLY SERGEANT—ROBERT BURTON!'—just that way it called my name.

"And I wondered who could call me so distinctly and so slow,
Knew it couldn't be the Lighter; he could not have spoken so;
And I tried to answer, 'Here, sir!' but I couldn't make it go;
For I couldn't move a muscle, and I couldn't make it go.

"Then I thought: It's all a nightmare, all a humbug and a bore;
Just another foolish *grape-vine*—and it won't come any more;
But it came, sir, notwithstanding, just the same way as before:
'ORDERLY SERGEANT—ROBERT BURTON!'—even plainer than before.

"That is all that I remember, till a sudden burst of light,
And I stood beside the river, where we stood that Sunday night,
Waiting to be ferried over to the dark bluffs opposite,
When the river was perdition and all hell was opposite!—

"And the same old palpitation came again in all its power,
And I heard a Bugle sounding, as from some celestial Tower;
And the same mysterious voice said: 'IT IS THE ELEVENTH HOUR!
ORDERLY SERGEANT!—ROBERT BURTON—IT IS THE ELEVENTH HOUR!'

"Dr. Austin!—what *day* is this?" "It is Wednesday night, you know."

"Yes,—to-morrow will be New Year's and a right good time below!

What time is it, Dr. Austin?" "Nearly Twelve." "Then don't you go!

Can it be that all this happened—all this—not an hour ago!

"There was where the gunboats opened on the dark rebellious host;

And where Webster semicircled his last guns upon the coast;

There were still the two log-houses, just the same, or else their ghost!

And the same old transport came and took me over—or its ghost!

"And the old field lay before me, all deserted, far and wide; There was where they fell on Prentiss—there McClermand met the tide;

There was where stern Sherman rallied, and where Hurlbut's heroes died,—

Lower down, where Wallace charged them, and kept charging till he died.

"There was where Lew Wallace showed them he was of the canny kin,

There was where old Nelson thundered, and where Rousseau waded in;

There McCook sent 'em to breakfast, and we all began to win—

There was where the grape-shot took me, just as we began to win.

"Now, a shroud of snow and silence over everything was spread;

And but for this old blue mantle and the old hat on my head,

I should not have even doubted, to this moment, I was dead,—

For my footsteps were as silent as the snow upon the dead!

3138 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

“Death and silence!—Death and silence! all around me as I sped!

And behold, a mighty Tower, as if builded to the dead,
To the Heaven of the heavens lifted up its mighty head,
Till the Stars and Stripes of Heaven all seemed waving from
its head!

“Round and mighty-based it towered up into the infinite—
And I knew no mortal mason could have built a shaft so
bright;

For it shone like solid sunshine; and a winding stair of
light

Wound around it and around it till it wound clear out of
sight!

“And, behold, as I approached it—with a rapt and dazzled
stare,—

Thinking that I saw old comrades just ascending the great
Stair,—

Suddenly the solemn challenge broke of, ‘Halt! and who
goes there?’

‘I’m a friend,’ I said, ‘if you are.’ ‘Then advance, sir, to
the Stair!’

“I advanced! That sentry, Doctor, was Elijah Ballantyne!
First of all to fall on Monday, after we had formed the
line!

‘Welcome, my old Sergeant, welcome! Welcome by that
countersign!’

And he pointed to the scar there, under this old cloak of
mine.

“As he grasped my hand, I shuddered, thinking only of the
grave;

But he smiled and pointed upward with a bright and blood-
less glaive:

‘That’s the way, sir, to Headquarters.’ ‘What Headquarters?’
‘Of the Brave.’

‘But the great Tower?’ ‘That was builded of the great
deeds of the Brave!’

Jim Bludso of the Prairie Belle 3139

"Then a sudden shame came o'er me at his uniform of light;
At my own so old and tattered, and at his so new and bright;
'Ah!' said he, 'you have forgotten the New Uniform to-night!

Hurry back, for you must be here at just twelve o'clock to-night!'

"And the next thing I remember, you were sitting *there*, and
I

Doctor—did you hear a footstep? Hark!—God bless you
all! Good-by!

Doctor, please to give my musket and my knapsack, when
I die,

To my son—my son that's coming,—he won't get here till
I die!

"Tell him his old father blessed him—as he never did before,—

And to carry that old musket . . . Hark! a knock is at
the door! . . .

Till the Union . . . See! it opens!" . . . "Father!
Father! speak once more!" . . .

"*Bless you!*"—gasped the old gray Sergeant. And he lay
and said no more!

Byron Forceythe Willson [1837-1867]

JIM BLUDSO OF THE PRAIRIE BELLE

WALL, no! I can't tell whar he lives,
Becase he don't live, you see;
Leastways, he's got out of the habit
Of livin' like you and me.
Whar have you been for the last three year
That you haven't heard folks tell
How Jimmy Bludso passed in his checks
The night of the Prairie Belle?

He weren't no saint,—them engineers
Is all pretty much alike,—
One wife in Natchez-under-the-Hill
And another one here, in Pike;

A keerless man in his talk, was Jim,
 And an awkward hand in a row,
 But he never flunked, and he never lied,—
 I reckon he never knowed how.

And this was all the religion he had,—
 To treat his engine well;
 Never be passed on the river;
 To mind the pilot's bell;
 And if ever the Prairie Belle took fire,—
 A thousand times he swore
 He'd hold her nozzle agin the bank
 Till the last soul got ashore.

All boats has their day on the Mississip,
 And her day come at last,—
 The Movastar was a better boat,
 But the Belle she *wouldn't* be passed.
 And so she come tearin' along that night —
 The oldest craft on the line—
 With a nigger squat on her safety-valve,
 And her furnace crammed, rosin and pine.

The fire bust out as she clared the bar,
 And burnt a hole in the night,
 And quick as a flash she turned, and made
 For that willer-bank on the right.
 There was runnin' and cursin', but Jim yelled out,
 Over all the infernal roar,
 "I'll hold her nozzle agin the bank
 Till the last galoot's ashore."

Through the hot, black breath of the burnin' boat
 Jim Bludso's voice was heard,
 And they all had trust in his cussedness,
 And knowed he would keep his word.
 And, sure's you're born, they all got off
 Afore the smoke-stacks fell,—
 And Bludso's ghost went up alone
 In the smoke of the Prairie Belle.

He weren't no saint,—but at jedgment
 I'd run my chance with Jim,

'Longside of some pious gentlemen
That wouldn't shook hands with him.
He seen his duty, a dead-sure thing,—
And went for it thar and then;
And Christ ain't a going to be too hard
On a man that died for men.

John Hay [1838-1905]

LITTLE BREECHES

I DON'T go much on religion,
I never ain't had no show;
But I've got a middlin' tight grip, sir,
On the handful o' things I know.
I don't pan out on the prophets
And free-will, and that sort of thing,—
But I b'lieve in God and the angels,
Ever sence one night last spring.

I come into town with some turnips,
And my little Gabe come along,—
No four-year-old in the county
Could beat him for pretty and strong,
Peart and chipper and sassy,
Always ready to swear and fight,—
And I'd larnt him to chaw terbacker,
Jest to keep his milk-teeth white.

The snow come down like a blanket
As I passed by Taggart's store;
I went in for a jug of molasses
And left the team at the door.
They scared at something and started,—
I heard one little squall,
And hell-to-split over the prairie
Went team, Little Breeches and all.

Hell-to-split over the prairie!
I was almost froze with skeer;
But we roused up some torches,
And sarched for 'em far and near.

3142 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

At last we struck hosses and wagon,
 Snowed under a soft white mound,
 Upsot, dead beat,—but of little Gabe
 No hide nor hair was found.

And here all hope soured on me
 Of my fellow-critter's aid,—
 I jest flopped down on my marrow-bones,
 Crotch-deep in the snow, and prayed.

By this, the torches was played out,
 And me and Isrul Parr
 Went off for some wood to a sheepfold
 That he said was somewhar thar.

We found it at last, and a little shed
 Where they shut up the lambs at night.
 We looked in, and seen them huddled thar,
 So warm and sleepy and white;
 And thar sot Little Breeches and chirped,
 As peart as ever you see,
 "I want a chaw of terbacker,
 And that's what's the matter of me."

How did he get thar? Angels.
 He could never have walked in that storm.
 They jest scooped down and toted him
 To whar it was safe and warm.
 And I think that saving a little child,
 And fotching him to his own,
 Is a derned sight better business
 Than loafing around the Throne.

John Hay [1838-1905]

THE VAGABONDS

WE are two travelers, Roger and I.
 Roger's my dog.—Come here, you scamp!
 Jump for the gentlemen,—mind your eye!
 Over the table,—look out for the lamp!—

The rogue is growing a little old;

Five years we've tramped through wind and weather,
And slept out-doors when nights were cold,
And ate and drank—and starved—together.

We've learned what comfort is, I tell you!

A bed on the floor, a bit of rosin,
A fire to thaw our thumbs (poor fellow!
The paw he holds up there's been frozen),
Plenty of catgut for my fiddle
(This out-door business is bad for strings),
Then a few nice buckwheats hot from the griddle,
And Roger and I set up for kings!

No, thank ye, Sir,—I never drink;

Roger and I are exceedingly moral,—
Aren't we, Roger?—See him wink!—
Well, something hot, then—we won't quarrel.
He's thirsty, too,—see him nod his head?
What a pity, Sir, that dogs can't talk!
He understands every word that's said,—
And he knows good milk from water-and-chalk.

The truth is, Sir, now I reflect,

I've been so sadly given to grog,
I wonder I've not lost the respect
(Here's to you, Sir!) even of my dog.
But he sticks by, through thick and thin;
And this old coat, with its empty pockets
And rags that smell of tobacco and gin,
He'll follow while he has eyes in his sockets.

There isn't another creature living

Would do it, and prove, through every disaster,
So fond, so faithful, and so forgiving,
To such a miserable, thankless master!
No, Sir!—see him wag his tail and grin!
By George! it makes my old eyes water!—
That is, there's something in this gin
That chokes a fellow. But no matter!

3144 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

We'll have some music, if you're willing,
 And Roger (hem! what a plague a cough is, Sir!)
 Shall march a little. Start, you villain!
 Paws up! Eyes front! Salute your officer!
 'Bout face! Attention! Take your rifle!
 (Some dogs have arms, you see!) Now hold your
 Cap while the gentlemen give a trifle,
 To aid a poor old patriot soldier!

March! Halt! Now show how the rebel shakes
 When he stands up to hear his sentence.
 Now tell us how many drams it takes
 To honor a jolly new acquaintance.
 Five yelps,—that's five; he's mighty knowing!
 The night's before us, fill the glasses!—
 Quick, Sir! I'm ill,—my brain is going!—
 Some brandy,—thank you,—there!—it passes!

Why not reform? That's easily said;
 But I've gone through such wretched treatment,
 Sometimes forgetting the taste of bread,
 And scarce remembering what meat meant,
 That my poor stomach's past reform;
 And there are times when, mad with thinking,
 I'd sell out heaven for something warm
 To prop a horrible inward sinking.

Is there a way to forget to think?
 At your age, Sir, home, fortune, friends,
 A dear girl's love,—but I took to drink;—
 The same old story; you know how it ends.
 If you could have seen these classic features,—
 You needn't laugh, Sir; they were not then
 Such a burning libel on God's creatures;
 I was one of your handsome men!

If you had seen HER, so fair and young,
 Whose head was happy on this breast!
 If you could have heard the songs I sung
 When the wine went round, you wouldn't have guessed

That ever I, Sir, should be straying
 From door to door, with fiddle and dog,
 Ragged and penniless, and playing
 To you to-night for a glass of grog!

She's married since,—a parson's wife:
 'Twas better for her that we should part,—
 Better the soberest, prosiest life
 Than a blasted home and a broken heart.
 I have seen her? Once: I was weak and spent
 On the dusty road: a carriage stopped:
 But little she dreamed, as on she went,
 Who kissed the coin that her fingers dropped!

You've set me talking, Sir; I'm sorry,
 It makes me wild to think of the change!
 What do you care for a beggar's story?
 Is it amusing? you find it strange?
 I had a mother so proud of me!
 'Twas well she died before—Do you know
 If the happy spirits in heaven can see
 The ruin and wretchedness here below?

Another glass, and strong, to deaden
 This pain; then Roger and I will start.
 I wonder, has he such a lumpish, leaden,
 Aching thing in place of a heart?
 He is sad sometimes, and would weep, if he could,
 No doubt, remembering things that were,—
 A virtuous kennel, with plenty of food,
 And himself, a sober, respectable cur.

I'm better now; that glass was warming.—
 You rascal! limber your lazy feet!
 We must be fiddling and performing
 For supper and bed, or starve in the street.—
 Not a very gay life to lead, you think?
 But soon we shall go where lodgings are free,
 And the sleepers need neither victuals nor drink;—
 The sooner the better for Roger and me!

John Townsend Trowbridge [1827—

HOW WE BEAT THE FAVORITE

A LAY OF THE LOAMSHIRE HUNT CUP

“AYE, squire,” said Stevens, “they back him at evens;
The race is all over, bar shouting, they say;
The Clown ought to beat her; Dick Neville is sweeter
Than ever—he swears he can win all the way.

“A gentleman rider—well, I’m an outsider,
But if he’s a gent, who the mischief’s a jock?
You swells mostly blunder, Dick rides for the plunder,
He rides, too, like thunder—he sits like a rock.

“He calls ‘hunted fairly’ a horse that has barely
Been stripped for a trot within sight of the hounds,
A horse that at Warwick beat Birdlime and Yorick,
And gave Abdelkader at Aintree nine pounds.

“They say we have no test to warrant a protest;
Dick rides for a lord and stands in with a steward;
The light of their faces they show him—his case is
Prejudged and his verdict already secured.

“But none can outlast her, and few travel faster,
She strides in her work clean away from The Drag;
You hold her and sit her, she couldn’t be fitter,
Whenever you hit her she’ll spring like a stag.

“And p’raps the green jacket, at odds though they back it,
May fall, or there’s no knowing what may turn up.
The mare is quite ready, sit still and ride steady,
Keep cool; and I think you may just win the Cup.”

Dark-brown with tan muzzle, just stripped for the tussle,
Stood Iseult, arching her neck to the curb,
A lean head and fiery, strong quarters and wiry,
A loin rather light, but a shoulder superb.

Some parting injunction, bestowed with great unction,
I tried to recall, but forgot like a dunce,
When Reginald Murray, full tilt on White Surrey,
Came down in a hurry to start us at once.

"Keep back in the yellow! Come up on Othello!
Hold hard on the Chestnut! Turn round on The Drag!
Keep back there on Spartan! Back you, sir, in tartan!
So, steady there, easy," and down went the flag.

We started, and Kerr made strong running on Mermaid.
Through furrows that led to the first stake-and-bound,
The crack, half extended, looked bloodlike and splendid,
Held wide on the right where the headland was sound.

I pulled hard to baffle her rush with the snaffle,
Before her two-thirds of the field got away,
All through the wet pasture where floods of the last year
Still loitered, they clotted my crimson with clay.

The fourth fence, a wattle, floored Monk and Blue-bottle;
The Drag came to grief at the blackthorn and ditch,
The rails toppled over Redoubt and Red Rover,
The lane stopped Lycurgus and Leicestershire Witch.

She passed like an arrow Kildare and Cock Sparrow,
And Mantrap and Mermaid refused the stone wall;
And Giles on The Greyling came down at the paling,
And I was left sailing in front of them all.

I took them a burster, nor eased her nor nursed her
Until the Black Bullfinch led into the plow,
And through the strong bramble we bored with a scramble—
My cap was knocked off by the hazel-tree bough.

Where furrows looked lighter I drew the rein tighter;
Her dark chest all dappled with flakes of white foam,
Her flanks mud-bespattered, a weak rail she shattered;
We landed on turf with our heads turned for home.

Then crashed a low binder, and then close behind her
The sward to the strokes of the favorite shook;
His rush roused her mettle, yet ever so little
She shortened her stride as we raced at the brook.

She rose when I hit her. I saw the stream glitter,
A wide scarlet nostril flashed close to my knee,
Between sky and water The Clown came and caught her —
The space that he cleared was a caution to see.

3148 Poems of Sentiment and Reflection

And forcing the running, discarding all cunning,
A length to the front went the rider in green;
A long strip of stubble, and then the big double,
Two stiff flights of rails with a quickset between.

She raced at the rasper, I felt my knees grasp her,
I found my hands give to her strain on the bit,
She rose when The Clown did—our silks as we bounded
Brushed lightly, our stirrups clashed loud as we lit.

A rise steeply sloping, a fence with stone coping—
The last—we diverged round the base of the hill;
His path was the nearer, his leap was the clearer,
I flogged up the straight, and he led sitting still.

She came to his quarter, and on still I brought her,
And up to his girth, to his breast-plate she drew;
A short prayer from Neville just reached me,—“The Devil,”
He muttered,—locked level the hurdles we flew.

A hum of hoarse cheering, a dense crowd careering,
All sights seen obscurely, all shouts vaguely heard;
“The green wins!” “The crimson!” The multitude swims
on,
And figures are blended and features are blurred.

“The horse is her master!” “The green forges past her!”
“The Clown will outlast her!” “The Clown wins!”
“The Clown!”

The white railing races with all the white faces,
The chestnut outpaces, outstretches the brown.

On still past the gateway she strains in the straightway,
Still struggles, “The Clown by a short neck at most,”
He swerves, the green scourges, the stand rocks and surges,
And flashes, and verges, and flits the white post.

Ay! so ends the tussle,—I knew the tan muzzle
Was first, though the ring-men were yelling “Dead heat!”
A nose I could swear by, but Clarke said “The mare by
A short head.” And that’s how the favorite was beat.

Adam Lindsay Gordon [1833-1870]

